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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS IN TURKEY: MOTIVES  
BEHIND THE SHIFT OF POWER FROM MILITARY TO  
CIVILIANS AFTER THE INTERVENTIONS**

by

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March 2013

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OF POWER FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIANS AFTER THE  
INTERVENTIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Turkish Military, the most trusted institution in the country for decades, has been a symbol of modernization and secularism in the country since the independence of the Republic in 1923. Especially with the introduction of the multi-party system after the Second World War, Turkish Military's role became conspicuous by military interventions. Turkey witnessed 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997, and 2007 military interventions each in a different character. However, instead of grasping the civilian authority for decades, Turkish military elite tried to stay behind the curtains and passed on the governance to the civilians. Turkey was under direct control of the military only through 1960–62 and 1980–83. Especially in the last decade, the change in civil-military relations, aroused a scholarly debate over the role of the military in civilian authority. This thesis examines the military interventions in order to define the attitudes of the military elite, by focusing on the reasons of the fast shift of power from military to civilians. This thesis argues that the delegation of power from military to civilians is mainly due to the harsh isolation of officer corps from politics, democratic incentives in terms of modernization, and economic and institutional developments.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AFU	Armed Forces Union
CMR	Civil Military Relations
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
DP	Democrat Party
JDP	Justice and Development Party
NSC	National Security Council
NUC	National Unity Committee
RPP	Republican People's Party
TGS	Turkish General Staff

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to examine the experience of Turkey with regards to civil military relations. Turkish Military, the most trusted institution in the country for decades, has been a symbol of modernization and secularism in the country since the independence of the Republic in 1923. Especially with the introduction of the multi-party system after the Second World War, Turkish Military's role became conspicuous by military interventions. Turkey witnessed 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997, and 2007 military interventions each in a different character.

1960 intervention was an actual military coup, after which, the prime minister and his two cabinet members were executed, the constitution changed and a military elite governed the country for nearly a year. 1971 intervention was an ultimatum which affected the course of politics in favor of the military institutions, but did not open the way for a military regime. 1980 military coup was similar to 1960 coup in a sense that the military took the power for three years. The one in 1997 was accepted as a post-modern intervention, since the military urged the prime minister to resign, but did not take the authority. 2007 intervention, which was a warning about the presidential elections to the politicians by the Chief of the General Staff, had the least effect in the political arena. It was not only rejected by the government of the time but also bolstered its prestige as a political element. In essence, although the character of the intervention sometimes turned out to be a military coup, Turkish military elite tried to stay behind the curtains and passed on the governance to the civilians instead of grasping the civilian authority for decades.

This thesis specifically will focus on the shift of power from military to civilians after the military interventions. 1960 and 1980 military coups will be the landmarks in terms of periodization of the Turkish civil military relations history, since only after these two military interventions did the Turkish Military take the power and the authority of the civilian government. Thus, the main research question is: "What are the factors and

causative explanations that favor the military to delegate the governmental authority back to civilians?”

This thesis examines the military coups in order to define the attitudes of the military elite, by focusing on the reasons of the fast shift of power from military back to civilians. This thesis argues that the delegation of power from military to civilians is mainly due to the harsh isolation of officer corps from politics, democratic incentives in terms of modernization, and economic and institutional developments.

## **B. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Turkish Military, the most trusted institution in the country for decades, has been a symbol of modernization and secularism in the country since the independence of the Republic in 1923. However, modern Turkey has a history of military interventions and transitions to democracy. The recurrence of the military interventions proves the role of the military as the ‘guardian of the state,’ while the recurrence of the transitions to democracy proves that Turkish military is committed to a democratic form of government. Thus, it would be logical to state that Turkish military has two conflicting political traditions: the ‘guardian,’ and the ‘modernizer.’<sup>1</sup>

The role of the Turkish military in politics had always been debated. However, in the last five years, a number of lawsuits were brought and numerous officers including several retired four-star generals have been sued in the civilian courts. Moreover, some of these four-star generals, accused of planning a military coup against the elected government, have been sentenced to 18–20 years, which even could not be imagined a short period of time ago. These developments have manifested that the course of civil military relations in Turkey have a new track. Thus, in these years, it is crucial to understand the motives of democracy among the military elite in Turkey, whose superiors had transitioned the administration of the country to democracy after 1960 and 1980 coups.

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<sup>1</sup> Dağı, İhsan D. *Democratic Transitions in Turkey, 1980-83: The Impact of the European Diplomacy*. Middle Eastern Studies, 32, no. 2, April 1996, 124.

The importance of this study is twofold. Firstly, it tries to explain the causative explanations of shift of power from military to civilians after the military interventions, particularly touching on the historical background. Secondly, it seeks to understand the dynamics of civil-military relations in Turkey, which gained importance in the last decade with the engagement of the high rank generals in lawsuits, regarding alleged coups against the incumbent government.

### **C. METHOD OF ANALYSES**

This study employs the periodization method, which divides the past into periods that can be obviously identified and that differ from one another in a perceivable way. The military interventions, which became socially, politically, economically and historically turning points of the Turkish history, will be the landmarks of the periodization method.

Although there are five military interventions (1960, 1971, 1980, 1997, and 2007) in Turkish history, only two of them (1960 and 1980) were actual military coups. Since we studied the transition from military regime to democracy after the military coups, we did not consider 1971, 1997, and 2007 military interventions as landmarks in our study although they had great importance in Turkey's recent history.

Since Turkish military history goes back to 209 B.C., it is important for our study to analyze the historical background of Turkish army in terms of civil military relations. Historical background will provide the traditional military institution and its traditional role in Turkish politics. It will cover a timeline beginning from the Ottoman times until 1918, the beginning of the independence struggle for the Republic of Turkey. The first period will cover 1918–1960. The second period will analyze the two decades between 1960 and 1980 military coups. The third and the last period will examine the civil military relations since the last military coup of 1980.

#### **1. The Underlying Causes of the Military Interventions in Turkey**

The underlying causes of the military interventions in Turkey are;

- Socio-political conditions
- Military Professionalism (Turkish interpretation)

## **2. The Variables of the Study**

In our study, we will examine three periods of modern Turkish civil-military relations history. In each period, we will look for the developments in terms of our variables. The developments of a previous period are effective in the fast transition of power of the next period. The variables that we will work on are:

- Isolation from politics,
- Democratic Motives,
- Economic and Institutional Developments.

Through this periodical examination of the history of civil military relations in Turkey in regards to these variables, this study seeks to find causative explanations to the power shift from the military back to the civilians after the military coups.

## **D. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

This thesis consists of seven chapters:

Chapter I is the introduction. In this chapter, the objective of the study will be explained. The Importance of the study is mostly due to the last developments in civil military relations in Turkey. The method of the study will be summarized and this section will be the last part of the first chapter.

Chapter II reviews the literature on the concepts of civil military relations in terms of military interventions and transition to democracy. In this chapter, the underlying causes of Turkey's military interventions will be scrutinized. The military professionalism and the socio-political weaknesses and their relation to the civil military relations of Turkey will be summarized. It will be understood that the recurrent interventions in Turkey are due to socio political weaknesses, while recurrent transitions to democracy is partly due to the 'modernizer' role of the Turkish military. It then summarizes a theoretical framework designed for analyzing the motives of shift of power

from military elite to the civilians. Lastly the terms with their meanings in the study are explained.

Chapter III is explaining the background of the civil military relations in Turkish history. The unique system of Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire, their initial successes, and their evolution towards being a problematic political element will be summarized. The urgent need of a reform in the military, the repercussions and the beginning of the tradition of interventions in Turkish military will be viewed in that chapter. The Prussian-style modernization of the army and the infiltration of politics into military will shed light on the first organized interventions of Turkish military. The most important section of this chapter is the Summary and the Inferences, which will draw a framework of the evolution of civil military relations. It will be seen that the traditional role of the military had been evolved from being the privileged guardians of the Ottoman Palace, to the guardian of the Turkish regime.

Chapter IV is the first period of the Modern Turkish civil military relations history. It covers the period between 1923 in which the Turkish Republic was founded and 1960, in which the first military intervention was made. In this chapter, the evolution of the role of the military, which culminated with an intervention in which the prime minister of the republic was executed, is being examined.

Chapter V is the second period of the study which covers the post 1960 intervention and 1980 intervention. In this period, the changes in Turkish army after 1960 coup and the effects of 1971 coup are being examined.

Chapter VI is the third and the last period of the study which begins with 1980 military coup and extends to the contemporary civil military relations issues that Turkey witnessed in recent years.

The final chapter (Chapter VII) offers the summary and the conclusion to the 'puzzle' as to what are the causative explanations of the shift of power from military elite to the civilians.

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## **II. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL LITERATURE**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

For a better understanding of the framework of the analysis of the civil-military relation processes in Turkey, this chapter examines literature on military intervention. Specifically, it will explain the concepts of military intervention, and the general literature on civil military relations in Turkey.

In the literature on intervention, there are two widely accepted theories that explain military involvement in politics of modern states. These concepts focus on military professionalism and the socio-political reasons for military coups.

### **B. MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM**

The leading advocate of military professionalism was Samuel P. Huntington who introduced one of the most significant contributions to theories of military intervention in politics.<sup>2</sup><sup>[A1]</sup> Huntington explains (with the definition of Harold Laswell) the central skill of officers as “the management of violence.”<sup>3</sup> He adds that this strange ability of military officers is universal because its essence does not change in different times or locations.

The management of violence is an ample explanation of the nature of the military coups. If there is uncontrolled violence in a country and if civilian institutions which represent the state and the legal power cannot ease the violence, the military must control it. This quality of the military made it different from all kinds of civilian professions. Huntington makes comparisons between an officer and a dentist and he concludes that civilians work for their own economic interests, whereas military officers do not think of personal advantage. It is the nature of military expertise; the officers bear a social

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<sup>2</sup> Huntington, P. Samuel. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and the Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 11.

responsibility by nature of their vocation. If any officer breaks this responsibility in order to follow his personal ambitions, he breaks also the fabric of society.<sup>4</sup>

Huntington's sensible evaluations clarify the universal understanding of the military profession; the profession draws its own limitations for its own sake and out of loyalty to its office rather than any kind of advantageous position. Briefly, Huntington's professionalism, which can be described as expertise, responsibility, and corporateness,<sup>5</sup> is based on universal description of military profession.

Huntington mentions the merit of professionalism, which was introduced by the Prussian Army to the West. Moreover, he attributes the success of the Prussian Army over the French Army to the professional system of the Prussians.<sup>6</sup> He presents the underlying factors in the growth of military professionalism as;

*The growth of population,*

*The growth of the nation state,*

*The rise of democratic ideals,*

*A recognized legitimate authority over the military forces.<sup>7</sup>*

The growth of population helped form mass armies with hundreds of thousands of soldiers under numerous branches that had different functions. War was no more an uncomplicated and simple affair. Land and naval forces made it more difficult to coordinate so many different specialties. Thus, a new specialist was needed, who coordinated all of those differences into one direction. This was the professional military officer.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 30–35.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 32.



The growth of the nation state helped military professionalism in supplying the needs of the military both in monetary terms and human resources. The provision of the needs of an officer corps necessitated a society that had highly developed governmental institutions which were, in turn, fed by national resources.<sup>9</sup>

The rise of democratic ideas was crucial due to the fact that military intervention was a matter of democracy.<sup>10</sup> Huntington emphasizes that the rise of democratic ideals and parties influenced the growth of professionalism. Democratic ideals had to battle aristocratic ones in order to survive. It was a clash of the definition of military, either a democratic army, which was based on national and democratic ideals, or an aristocratic army, which was a monopoly of nobles over the military. However, Huntington sees “a military that is neither democratic nor aristocratic” based on a new definition which necessitates that the military be an institution relied on its own principles.<sup>11</sup>

A recognized legitimate authority controlling the military forces was the most critiqued part of military intervention, because in the background of many military coups it was the absence of such a controlling power which exposed the state to an imminent military intervention. Huntington draws attention to the necessary loyalty of an officer to an authority completely divorced from constitutional politics.<sup>12</sup>

Bruneau, stresses the sources of tension in civil-military relations, in addition to Huntington. According to Bruneau, different cultural norms between political leaders and military officers are permanent source of tension. The harmony of a rational foreign policy and maintaining a military in accordance with this policy is critical to prevent any probable tension.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>10</sup> Acemoglu, Daron, et al. *A Theory of Military Dictatorships*. National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 13915, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 34.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>13</sup> Bruneau, Thomas C. *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relation*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006., 23.

Andreski's stratification that emphasizes the importance of power contributed to the significance of a professional point of view. Andreski brings historical facts to the fore and asserts that "everywhere we find that those who bear arms constitute a privileged stratum."<sup>14</sup>

As a conclusion, we can say that military professionalism, which was defined by Huntington, is a factor that keeps the officer corps away from a political activity. The reasons of this professionalism are not confined to what have been written above; they may vary in different countries. And in Turkish case there is another version of professionalism, which doesn't keep the officer corps away from taking actions against the government, but prevents them from insisting on staying in the power of the civilian authority. According to the Turkish military elite, who organized the interventions, the intervening action is due to the inability of the civilian politicians. In their view, the *professionalism* "necessitates to intervene and re-organize (or regulate) the political system, and return it to the civilians." In this study we will try to explain the motives of that Turkish military professionalism, which urged the military regimes to intervene, and soon after delegate the authority back to the civilians.

### C. SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Samuel E. Finer is one of the main scholars of civil military relations literature. Different from Huntington, who assumes that the professionalism of the military and its nature will tend to obey to the civilian rule, Finer claims that the nature of military tends to disobey. Asserting that civilian control of military is not *natural*, Finer states that different institutions with different purposes have a potential to conflict unless, he claims, the disposition of the military is to obey. Thus, it is *the occasion and the disposition* of the military that will decide a probable intervention.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Andreski, Stanislaw. *Military Organizations and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968, 20–74.

<sup>15</sup> Finer, E. Samuel. *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006, 23.

Finer's *maturity division* was the second theory explaining the causes of interventions with social and political conditions. A professor of government and politics in England after World War II, he came up with his theory about the political atmosphere which invited or prevented a military intervention. He asserted that only countries with *mature* political institutions and behaviors are actually immune to any kind of military intervention.<sup>16</sup> He divided the levels of intervention into four types according to the maturity of political culture:

*Mature political culture (influence),*

*Developed political culture (blackmail),*

*Low political culture (displacement),*

*Minimal political culture (supplantment)<sup>17</sup>*

Finer's study of civil military relations and military interventions successfully focuses on the reasons and the causative explanations of military interventions and he places Turkey into the "low political culture" countries together with Spain and Argentina. However, there is something more to say about a framework for explaining the fast shift of power from the Turkish Military to the civilians.

Actually the answer is among the explanations of Finer. Although Turkish military elite delegated the governmental authority back to civilians, it is scholarly accepted that they continued to have a say in the politics and went on playing a custody role on the regime. If we adapt the attitude of the military elite to Finer's Modes of Intervention (which are written in the parentheses above), Turkey's military elite have a role of *displacement* but not a *supplantment*. Thus, Finer, accepts that Turkish military's role in the politics is not *supplanting* but *regulating* or *redirecting*. This classification is a theoretical explanation to the fast shift of power from military to civilians in Turkey.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 86–204.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 87.

After these theoretical explanations of Turkish professionalism and the modes of the military intervention in the politics, the actual events should be analyzed for a better understanding of the fast shift of power.

#### **D. CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS IN TURKEY**

The history of civil military relations, specifically military interventions is rife with examples that the military will delegate the civilian authority back to a civilian government in a short period of time but the promises are mostly broken. However, Turkish army becomes an exception. Despite this exception, the role of the Turkish military as an actor in politics continues.

There are two themes explaining the role of the military as an actor in Turkey; the first theme accepts Turkish military as an independent actor, irrelevant from the civilian elite; the second theme interprets the condition of the military as a power in coordination with a civilian cadre. Most of the scholars use the first theme, accepting the Turkish military as an independent power in the politics. Similarly, we will use both of the themes in this study.

William Hale, as a proponent of the first theme, stresses the shift of power from military to a civilian government:

[A2] As Dankwart A. Rustow has reminded us, incoming military regimes usually promise a quick return to civilian rule, but seldom live up to the promise (Dankwart (1963). The fact that the Turkish army has proved exceptional in this respect indicates that the conditions which have determined its actions have differed significantly from those of other countries.[A3]<sup>18</sup>

It gains importance to define the different conditions that led to the relatively short direct military rules in Turkey. There may be many different interpretations of those conditions; international politics, the political inheritance from the Ataturk or earlier

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<sup>18</sup> Hale, *Transition in Turkey*, 159.

periods, or Turkish military's own experiences from previous interventions are some of them.<sup>19</sup>

Ahmet Kuru, a proponent of the second theme and an associate professor of political science in San Diego University, explains that the political role of the Turkish military has a direct proportion with the support of ideological allies in the country. He emphasizes that military leaders do not intervene in the politics by themselves; on the contrary they are highly supported and encouraged by civilian ideological allies. Kuru analyzes military intervention as a problem for democratic consolidation; in accordance, he believes that democracy will become more powerful with the decline of the military's political power. He implies that military interventions are carried out in favor of civilian allies.<sup>20</sup>

Kemal H. Karpaz successfully touches on the transition to civilian control after the first military intervention in 1960 in Turkey. However, he doesn't explain the reasons lying beneath the immediate transition.<sup>21</sup>

Mehmet Ali Birand, one of the most famous investigative journalists and news men in Turkey, includes vast information about the path to the third military intervention in 1980 in his book *The General's Coup in Turkey*.<sup>22</sup> He brilliantly gives voice to valuable personal data about the elite that planned and activated the military coup. However, he fails to provide the motives of the generals and causative explanations of the transition to democratic regime.

George Harris, a Professorial Lecturer at George Washington University and an expert on Turkey's regimes, depicts the attitudes of the generals as saviors of Turkey:

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>20</sup> Kuru, Ahmet. *The Rise and Fall of Military Tutelage in Turkey: Fears of Islamism, Kurdism, and Communism*. Insight Turkey, Vol. 14, no. 2, 2012, 37–57.

<sup>21</sup> Karpaz, Kemal H. *Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey, Before and After 1980*. In *State, Democracy, and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*. New York: Walter de Gruyter Publications, 1988, 137–158.

<sup>22</sup> Birand, Mehmet Ali. *The Generals' Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September 1980*. New York: Brassey's Defense Publishers, 1987.

When the generals moved to take power in this situation, they acted on the premise that the regime required more extensive adjustments than in 1971. . . . In short they believed that they were acting to save Turkish democracy from itself. . . . The military leaders sought to carry out these aims by reworking the constitution and amending the political parties act and the elections law.<sup>23</sup>

Different from the authoritarian constitution of 1961,

The adjustments embodied in the 1982 version were designed to prove ways to prevent parliamentary deadlock or to end it through such expedients as elections.<sup>24</sup>

Harris emphasizes the co-existence of civilian and military elites in the authority on the transition process. Foreign policy and economy were under the control of the prime minister, who liberalized the economy, while Evren, with his council comprised of some other generals, helped the administration by guiding the army to the emergent terror threats in the eastern provinces. There was a successful (if not harmonious) military and civilian coexistence.<sup>25</sup> Despite the author's keen determinations about the soft approaches of the generals towards the politicians, he doesn't illuminate the causative factors that compelled them to do so.

Nil Satana, an associate professor in Bilkent University in Turkey and an expert in civil-military relations, compares the types of civil-military relations of Europe, Turkey and the Middle East. She concludes that Turkey's civil-military relations type is closer to the European type; however, she has something to say about afterwards of military interventions in Turkey and transition process.<sup>26</sup>

In order to show the effects of the international organizations on civil-military relations of a country, Bruneau asserts that European Union (EU) had positive effects on the democratization process and preventing a possible military regime in Portugal in

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<sup>23</sup> Harris, George S. *The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics*. Middle East Journal, Vol. 19, no. 2, Part II, Spring, 1965, 193–195.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 193–195.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 177–200.

<sup>26</sup> Şatana, Nil S. *Civil-Military Relations in Europe, the Middle East, and Turkey*. Turkish Studies, Vol. 12, No.2. Accessed November, 9, 2012. doi: 10.1080/14683849.2011.572634., 279–292.

1974.<sup>27</sup> There are some other scholars who think that Turkey's membership process to EU had a similar effect on civil-military relations in Turkey in the late 1990s, which had affected the nature of the military intervention that turned out to be a soft coup in 1997.<sup>28</sup>

## **E. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSES**

In order to analyze Turkey and its military history in terms of military interventions and the fast shift of power from military to the civilians, it is important to take into consideration both the motives that caused the interventions and the motives that caused the military elite to walk out on the civilian domain of the authority

It is the weakness of the civilian governance that has the priority on pulling the military towards an intervention, while the coherence and intention of the military elite have an inclination toward an intervention. In Turkey case, the cause of the military intervention mostly shapes the outcome of it. From that point on, we will analyze the causes of the interventions in parallel with the causes of the shift of power after the interventions.

The underlying causes of the military interventions in Turkey are;

- Socio-political conditions
- Military Professionalism (Turkish interpretation)

In that analysis, we will examine each period according to three variables;

- Isolation of the officer corps from politics,
- Democratic incentives in terms of modernization,
- Economic and institutional developments.

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<sup>27</sup> Bruneau, Thomas C. *Democratization as a Global Phenomenon and its impact on Civil-Military Relations*. Democratization, Vol.13, no. 5, December 2006, 780.

<sup>28</sup> Aydinli, Ersel et al. *The Turkish Military's March toward Europe*. Foreign Affairs, Vol.85, No.1, Jan-Feb 2006, 77-90.

## **F. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS OF THE STUDY**

A reader that is not familiar with the civil military relations terminology may get confused with some terms used in this study. In this study,

“**Military Coup**” means the seizure of the civilian authority by the military.

“**Intervention**” means, a military interference which changes the course of the political life, it may be an actual coup or a more passive, only a redirecting action,

“**Military Regime**” means the tenure that military elite governs the country without taking off their uniforms,

“**Civilian Authority**” means the democratically elected civilian politicians and governments.



### **III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **1. The Role of the Military in the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922)**

Turkish history and the role of the military cannot be understood without examining the history of the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922). Ottoman Empire was founded in western Anatolia by nomadic Turks from the steppes of east Euroasia.<sup>29</sup> From the very beginning of the Ottoman dynasty the administration of the army and the state had been interconnected, since a Sultan had been both the leader of the state and the army. In a short period of history, the Ottomans annexed their lands from East Europe to the Yemen, from the Caspian Sea to Morocco.

One of the main reasons of the search for new lands was to introduce the Islam as well as to gain new tax revenues from those new lands. Thus, the religion and the economy were the primary motives of the Ottoman Dynasty which based on territorial expansion in the initial stages of its history.<sup>30</sup> It was the military that became the driving force of that territorial expansion. Thus, religion and economy, specifically military and state were nested in each other which formed a successful partnership for the first centuries of the Empire.

#### **2. A Successful System: Janissaries (Devshirmes)**

The second Sultan of the Ottoman State<sup>31</sup>, OrhanGazi began to create a new army, after the first quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, based on the Christian youths aged between twelve and twenty, who were taken from their families and converted to Islam. This army was called ‘YeniÇeri (Janissary)’ which meant the ‘new troops.’ They were trained in the Turkish farms among the Turkish families, and learned the language and the religion before taking a rigorous education in the Palace where they had the chance to

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<sup>29</sup> Shaw, Stanford J. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol. 1. New York: Cambridge Publications, 1977, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>31</sup> Author’s Note: Ottoman Empire was not an “Empire” until the conquest of Constantinople—Istanbul—in 1453.

join the state's ruling elite. Those soldiers were called as *devshirme* which meant 'the converted.'

The practice may sound harsh and even barbarous to our modern sensibilities, but the idea of being recruited into *devshirme* was so attractive to some that an occasional Muslim family would even ask their Christian neighbors to pass off their Muslim children as Christians so that they could be recruited.<sup>32</sup>

The *devshirme*, which was based on recruits who were taken purely according to their abilities, and generally from modest and rural areas, unlike feudal Europe where one's status in life would be determined according to the birth, integrated the Christian populations of the conquered lands into the Imperial System. Moreover, being a *devshirme* or a Janissary was a privilege, which cannot be gained by birth.

This privilege was bolstered by the fact that the *devshirmes* were only loyal to the Sultan, who was their master; in return they were the 'kuls' (slaves) of the Sultan. The Sultan had the power of life and death on them.<sup>33</sup> This loyalty generated a position for them besides the ruling elite. The *Janissaries* became a destructive factor for the Empire in the next centuries partly due to the feeling of being privileged.

Religious ties created coherence among the Janissaries. Strong dependence on religion, nested in the military from the very beginning of the Janissaries since they were blessed by a religious leader whose sect had been the primary faith of the Janissaries until their dissolution in 1826.<sup>34</sup> In the first centuries of the Empire, when the powerful Sultans were still on the saddles of their horses, conducting their armies, this coherence were helpful, since the Sultans were the leaders of their armies as well as that of religious sect. After the territorial expansion era ended in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the Janissaries had no income from waging wars, this coherence gave power to them to revolt.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ottoman State had well-organized and disciplined army, consisting of nearly 12000 *janissaries* (who were infantry of the time, consisting of

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<sup>32</sup> Ahmad, Feroz. *Turkey: The Quest for Identity*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 3–5.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 3–5.

the *devshirmes*), about 8000 *sipahis* (or well-trained cavalry, consisting of the Anatolian Turks), almost 40000 other troops which were led by rural notables and many thousands of irregulars. Christian vassals also supplied troops for fighting in Anatolia and Europe. A Serbian army fought within the Ottoman Army against the Mongols in 1402 Ankara War and a Wallachian Army in the siege of Vienna in 1683. Faroz Ahmad states in his well-known book *Turkey: The Quest for Identity*;

As late as 1683, during the second siege of Vienna, a Wallachian corps was given the task of bridging the Danube. A Muslim Ottoman Army, supposedly waging 'holy war' was willing to use Christian troops!<sup>35</sup>

The 16<sup>th</sup> century was the zenith of the Ottoman power, in which the Magnificent Suleiman ruled for nearly half a century and died in a war in 1566. After the demise of the Magnificent Suleiman, Ottoman armies had to wage long wars in two fronts, one in the Asia against the Persians (1578–90) and the other in the Europe against the Habsburgs of Austria (1593). The last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the herald of the fact that the next century for the Ottoman Empire was going to be difficult. Firstly because of the domestic unrest and secondly because the rising powers in the Europe were using monetary systems in their economies, while Ottoman Armies were still fed on land based economic regulations.

### **3. Janissaries Became an Element of Disorder**

In 1589, the Janissaries in Istanbul revolted. The reason of the revolt was a scholarly debate. According to Feroz Ahmad, the revolt was under the pretext of decreased payments and lower life standards.<sup>36</sup> For Stanford Shaw, the first revolt was instigated by the Sipahis, who were basically Anatolian Turks and were not in good terms with the Janissary priority in Istanbul and with the *devshirmes* at all; thus, the Janissary made the second revolt against the Sipahis.<sup>37</sup> It is out of our case to search such details, but it is important to note that the revolt was made by the Janissaries, which was quelled only in 1592.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>37</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 186.

The unrest, which could almost shadow the successes of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the Empire, took place in the central Anatolia and named as the *Celali* rebellions. It was ideologically supported by the Safevids, but materially backed by either soldiers that were out of army or the elite that were sent out of the Palace, in both cases they were mostly the *devshirmes*. Thus, 16<sup>th</sup> century was marked as the most successful era and the time that the Empire reached to its largest borders, together with upheavals that the military partly participated in.

The developments of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which may be called by some scholars as the ‘century of the crisis,’ for the Ottoman Empire, economically deteriorated the situation. It was mainly the economy of wars that affected the Empire. Having long wars with rising powers like Russia or Austria-Hungary, it became nearly impossible to maintain the manpower with the old tactics based on land. So the *devshirme* system had been almost completely left by recruiting the Janissaries as the *Kapikulu* soldiers who were the guardians of the Sultan and the Palace.<sup>38</sup>

#### **4. Need for Reform**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was understood that reforms were necessary, but the first overt reactions appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It reached to a level that the palace, first time in the history of the Empire, witnessed the execution of a Sultan by the Janissaries in 1622. Janissaries became a decisive force to determine the next candidate of the throne. Only after the half of the century, could the Empire recovered from military intervention of the Janissaries, ironically with the wisdom of a *devshirme*, who became the grand vizier of the Empire. He was Koprulu Mehmet Pasha, who initiated the successful Koprulu dynasty of the viziers in the Empire.

18<sup>th</sup> century began with a reformer Sultan, who ruled more than a quarter of a century. Freedom of press and the ‘Tulip Period’ marked the beginning of this period, which began to change the ideas of the Ottomans. However, the Sultan could not escape being replaced with the next Sultan by another revolt, called as *PatronaHalil Revolt* in

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 187.

1730. As a matter of course, the leader of the rebel was an Albanian Janissary.<sup>39</sup> The next Sultan and his administration were not traditional reformers. The grand vizier tried to open the door to a modern army by providing European advisers. But the continuous change of the bureaucrats prevented the expected effects of a modernization. However, in the last quarter of this century, the Sultan in person, dealt with the modernization of the army. That was why a revival in the Navy and in the Artillery was encountered to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

19<sup>th</sup> century began with another miserable event, in which one of the most reformist Sultans of the Empire was ousted from the power in 1807. III. Selim, who was in the throne in between 1789–1807 and who had corresponded with Louis XVI before being a Sultan, had to implement his reforms in a challenging era. The Empire had an excruciating war with Russia and Austria through 1787–92. In that period the tremendous demands of the war urged the Ottoman administration to rely more and more on the notables who for man and Armies, which in return gave them a chance to strengthen and extend their power. Thus, after the war, it was almost impossible for the Sultan to gain any significant control over them.<sup>40</sup>

## **5. “Nizam-I Cedid” Reforms and Isolation of Military from Politics**

Throughout the difficult last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the challenging first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Sultan, III Selim, tried to implement his reforms, among the risks of disintegration in the Empire. Those reforms were called as the “New Order (Nizam-I Cedid).” One of the most significant reforms that III Selim implemented was the organizational reform, through which he separated the administrative and military functions in each corps, with a separate civilian supervisor.<sup>41</sup> It was a turning point in civil-military relations of the Empire that helped his successor to completely abolish the Janissaries from the military in 1826.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 267.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 261.

The separation of the military and administrative institutions was a watershed in the civil-military relations history of Turkey. It was the seed of a tradition of isolation from politics in the Turkish Army which will be engrained in the officer corps for more than two centuries. The only exception of this isolation in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century concluded with an insulting defeat from Balkan countries in 1912. It is an issue of a further research.

III Selim reduced the size of the Janissaries, tried to take the notables under control who owned lands and provided men and armies, and professionalized several branches in the army like Artillery, Mortar, Mine-laying, and Cannon-Wagon branches.<sup>42</sup> His last attempt to abolish the Janissaries and establish a new army ended up with his execution by another Janissary revolt in 1807. Just after his death, the grand vizier of the time made an agreement with the notables, or local rulers, which was called as the Charter of Alliance, or the Ottoman Magna Carta, in 1808. The charter of alliance (*Sened-i ittifak*) between the central government and the local rulers secured the rights of the rulers in return to their alliance to the Sultan. Another Janissary revolt took place after the agreement which replaced the grand vizier, and the Sultan with the condition of the abolition of the new army.<sup>43</sup>

## **6. Notables as an Element of Disorder (1820–1840)**

With the ascendance of the new Sultan, II Mahmud (1808–1838), to the throne, a new struggle began. The local rulers or notables began to show signs of disobedience. He defeated one of his rulers, *Tepedelenli Ali Pasha*, in Greece, in 1820, which weakened his position in the region that led to the independence of the Greece. Another ruler, Mehmed Ali Pasha, who ruled Egypt after the short invasion of Napoleon, wanted to strengthen his position by demanding more lands in return for helping the Sultan to quell the Greek revolt in the 1820s. This domestic problem between the Sultan and his ruler went ahead and became an international crisis, which is out of this research.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmad, *Turkey*, 26.

II Mahmud abolished the already useless Janissary corps in 1826, which was also decreased in number, by establishing a new army. That was called as *the beneficial event*. II Mahmud had a significant role in the institutionalization of the army by establishing military academies for the land forces, navy and engineering branches in 1830s. He also institutionalized the civilian administration by implementing a new cabinet system consisting of ministers. II Mahmud's tenure ended with the most famous reform of the Empire: *Tanzimat (Restructuring or Reorganization)* in 1839. This was the official intention for a westernization process in the Empire.

## **7. Tanzimat Reforms 1839–1871<sup>44</sup>**

Tanzimat reforms were the most effective and broad of all the reform movements till then. However, they needed another 50 years to be completely implemented. Moreover, they were generally new laws, new regulations, or new institutions, rather than the abolition of the old ones.<sup>45</sup> This, in times, caused a duality in the institutions of the state, but accelerated the path for more modern administration.

Christians in the Empire were also incorporated into the Army which was forbidden for centuries. Conscription method was introduced. One of the important reforms related with the military was the reorganization of the provincial armies under one command in Istanbul. This ended the polyphony within the army, which had caused numerous upheavals for centuries. The creation of a modern navy in the 1860s ended up with a military fleet third in the Europe.

The civil military relations of the Ottoman Empire, was shaped in 19<sup>th</sup> century by the two reforms, first of which had isolated the officer corps from politics in the first quarter of the century, and the second of which had institutionalized the state and the army by the separation of powers and establishment of military institutions in the second quarter of the century.

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<sup>44</sup> Zurcher, Eric J. *Turkey: A Modern History*. Third Edition. New York: I.B.Tauris Publications, 2009, 56.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

## 8. 1876: The First Military Intervention of the Turkish Army

With the newest regulations, the military organizations gathered under the command of the *Serasker* (Chief of General Staff of the time) in Istanbul. This was a continuation of isolation of the military from politics. It would never be thought that the *Serasker* himself would one day participate in the organization of a coup, and execution of the Sultan under the pretext of suicide.

The coup was also supported by the *Young Turks (or Young Ottomans)*, an organization established in 1860s in support of constitutional monarchy. They wanted to end the autocracy of the Sultan and his bureaucrats, convinced that the laws of the state could not be reformed under absolutism.<sup>46</sup>

The intervention created a crisis in 1876. It turned out to be one of the most difficult years in the history of the Ottoman Empire, since it was the year of the first organized military coup, a year of three different Sultans, and a year of radical changes in the political system. After the execution/suicide of the incumbent Sultan, the health conditions of the second Sultan were not convenient for being a statesman; that was why, a third Sultan had to ascend to the throne. The third Sultan had to accept the new constitution and constitutional monarchy. Thus, 1876 became a turning point in the history of the Empire since radical changes in the course of history took place in this year.

1876 military coup, with the support of some political elite and *Young Turks*, became the first military coup in the history of the Turkish army, causing radical changes in the political system. This feature of the intervention would preserve itself for a century regardless of radical changes in the regime or political system.

However, the new Sultan, who ruled the Empire in between 1876–1908, closed the parliament due to the war with Russia in 1788–89. He used a despotic way of management, under which he passivized the army and its possible rivalry against himself. Using the label of the Caliphate (the leader of the all Muslims on the earth), he had successfully maintained an already shattering Empire for three decades, but he could not

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<sup>46</sup> Ahmad, *Turkey*, 37.



prevent the *Young Turks* movement making use of the popular discontent against his despotism. Finally, he had to descend from throne after another intervention in 1908.

The officers that were educated in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were imbued with the Prussian/German style of warfare, since Germany became the ally of the Empire, in that era. The famous German military strategist, Wilhelm Leopold Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, served for 12 years in the reorganization of the Ottoman army until 1895. His books (most importantly, *A Nation at Arms*) and many western oriented books were taken into the curriculum of the military academy, which affected the cadets to become imbued with the liberal thoughts.<sup>47</sup> The fresh officers of the Empire in the new century were ready for the imminent military intervention.

In that point it should be noted that, the Young Turks movement also had a great effect on preparing the officer corps for a change in the system. The main thinker of the Young Turks, Namik Kemal was punished to leave the country; he went to France and regrouped his organization. The officers, who were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> armies in the Balkans, were in touch with the new promising ideas of the movement. Thus, military was preparing for an internal war, a war that would change the political system of the Empire.

## **9. 1908 Intervention and the Structure of the Officer Corps**

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a general discomfort in the Empire. This was the same among the officer corps. Therefore, they tended to participate in some underground organizations. Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which was largely supported by the Young Turks, was established in 1806. Their cause was to change the administrative system of the Empire from autocracy to constitutional monarchy.

Everything was ready when an uprising took place in Istanbul in 13 May 1808. The officers, who were organized by CUP, had taken lead positions for quelling the uprising with a mass army, after which they carried out the 1908 military intervention.

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<sup>47</sup> Jenkins, Gareth. *Continuity and Change: Prospects for Civil-Military Relations in Turkey*. International Affairs, Vol. 83, no. 2, 2007, 340.

The Sultan was replaced, and a new constitution was written, similar but more liberal with regard to the constitution of the 1876. The structure of the officer corps was also changed in favor of the CUP officers:

In the army, the main source of trouble was the friction between the *mektepli* officers, who had been trained in the military schools and academy, and the *alayli* officers, who had risen through the ranks. The latter had been favored by the old regime, being paid regularly and stationed in the First Army in and around Istanbul, while the former had been mistrusted (rightly so, because it was these modern educated officers who brought about the constitutional revolution of 1908). Now the *mektepli* officers had taken over. Many of the *alayli* officers had dismissed or demoted and worse: the whole system of promotion from the ranks was discontinued. . . All in all, more than 10,000 or roughly one-third of the officers were removed over the next few years.<sup>48</sup>

These drastic changes created a vacuum among the officer corps. The young officers were promoted to high ranks and posts. Although the isolation of the officers from politics was principally accepted by CUP and adopted at CUP congress more than once, there was a profound relation between the officers and the parliament:

“The fact that relatively junior officers wielded great political influence through their positions in the CUP played havoc with the army discipline because the political hierarchy cut right through the military hierarchy of the officer corps.”<sup>49</sup>

CUP, which was led by young officers, ruled the Empire from 1908, to 1918. It was the most difficult decade of the Empire, since the insulting Balkan defeat, World War I, and the demise of the Empire would take place in that 10 year.

The interference of the military in the politics and the politicization of the army created an opposition organized an anti-CUP movement within the army and threatened an armed insurrection.<sup>50</sup> This was the signals of the political polarization of the army leading to the most humiliating defeat of its history.

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<sup>48</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 99–100.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 100–101.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 102.

## **10. A Politicized Army and a Humiliating Defeat: Balkan Wars (1912–13)**

It was 1912 that allied Balkan states (Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro) started the war against the Empire, just one year after the Italians started a war against the Ottomans for the lands in the North Africa in 1911. Due to the developments of the recent years, there was a lack of strategic and tactic coherence among the Ottoman army. The new War Minister was unfamiliar with the plans; while the former Chief of Staff, who had drawn them up, was now serving in the Yemen.<sup>51</sup> The first phase of the war was a humiliating defeat, in which the Bulgarian forces could come to the outskirts of Istanbul! Only after an armistice and the European intervention for balancing the power of the pro-Russian and pro-Austrian sides, could the Ottoman army regain some parts of the Turkish Europe. It was the second phase of the Balkan Wars, in 1913.

## **11. Summary and Inferences in Terms of Civil Military Relations**

The relation between Turkish Army and the State, and its evolution in the historical perspective, can be summarized as;

- The unification of the state and the army under the personality of the Sultan,
- The unique loyalty of the military to the Sultan but to no other entity,
- The privilege: the tradition of military men becoming state men,
- The army as an element of disorder in the Empire,
- The dire need for reforms and the resistance from the army,
- Transformation of the resistance and reactions into military intervention,
- The modernization of the army and the new education system on liberal thought,
- The army as a force, demanding a constitutional change in the regime,

Those are the phases of the evolution of the Turkish Army and its role in the state politics through the Ottoman history.

Regarding the fact that the founders of the new Turkish republic were the officers of the Ottoman Army and were imbued with the reformist thoughts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 107.

can be understood that the foundation of the new Turkish Republic and its new army were naturally affected by the evolution of this military-state interaction.

## **IV. CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE NEW REPUBLIC (1918–1960)**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. Mustafa Kemal's Leadership for the Independence**

Turkish Republic was founded in 23 October 1923, by a military cadre who were the leading actors of the independence process of 1918–1923. Mustafa Kemal (who later would be named as ATATURK, the father of the Turks) was the founding father of this process. He was originally an officer in the Ottoman Army who served in critical fronts like Canakkale (Gallipoli) in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, after which he gained a heroic reputation.

After the war, Allied powers signed a derogatory treaty (Sevres) with the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire in 1920, which almost ignored the existence of the Turks in the Anatolia, yet alone consolidating the Empire's sovereignty. Istanbul was invaded by European powers; moreover, French, Italian, Greek and British armies were marching in the Turkish soils in Anatolia. This treaty and developments bolstered the efforts for independence, which had been organized under the leadership of the famous general, Mustafa Kemal since 1919.

Mustafa Kemal, as an inspector vested with broad authority over the armies and provinces, was sent to Anatolia in 1919, by the Sublime Porte (Ottoman Government) to inspect and prevent any mobilization against the existence of the Allied soldiers. From the very first day of his duty, Mustafa Kemal sent messages to the provinces all over the country, and informed them about the situation in Istanbul and the way to save the country. He planned several meetings in strategic locations of Anatolia, and called for the representatives from provinces. He turned out to be against the puppet government of Istanbul which was under the control of the Britain and Allied powers. Similarly he turned against the cause of his duty that was to quell any uprisings. He became the representative of a total mobilization in the country; a mobilization that never resorted to violence.

## **2. Mustafa Kemal and the Officer Corps**

Through this mobilization of the country against the Allied powers, Mustafa Kemal, as a famous general who had to resign and take off his uniform in order to serve his country in 1919, had always been supported by the officer corps. A new assembly was convened in 1920, which was mostly led by the officers of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War Ottoman army, primarily by Mustafa Kemal. As the new institutions of the emergent republic began to functioning, the officer corps became the most important channel of information from center to the peripheries.

## **3. Unification of the Military and Politics**

Through the foundation processes, there was a similarity between the Ottoman State and the Turkish Republic in terms of civil military relations. The military and state was unified under the personality of the Ottoman Sultan in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, the state and the military were unified under the entity of the assembly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The assembly was led by the generals (primarily Mustafa Kemal) who were wearing civilian suits.

## **4. Reforms**

After the independence wars, which solidified the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and sent the foreign armies away from the country, the treaty of Lausanne was signed with the Allied powers in 1923. The proclamation of the Republic was made in the 29 October 1923, and reforms gained speed afterwards. While new institutions were established, the old ones were being abolished, and many other reforms were being undertaken gradually. But meanwhile, an opposition movement had aroused in the Assembly. Since the abolishment of the Sultanate and the Caliphate (the leader of the Muslims on the Earth), there were suspicions about an imminent tyranny or dictatorship of Mustafa Kemal. Based on these suspicions, a “second group,” who were not supporting Mustafa Kemal’s ideals, came into existence in the assembly. However, he

wanted to establish a structure based on more than personality, something that would outlast his death.<sup>52</sup>

As a summary, although the unification of the personality of Mustafa Kemal and the national movement was based on the personal charisma of Mustafa Kemal as a soldier, the developments that led to the foundation of a new republic necessitated the isolation from military personality. As he resigned from a powerful military post in 1919 in an eastern province of Turkey to serve for his country in terms of a civilian struggle, he also embraced and showed the difference between the soldier and the statesman. As he ascended the stairs of his political career he emphasized the necessity for isolation of the military from politics. From his time on, this isolation became one of the main traditions of the officer corps and affected the civil military relations of Turkey in a positive way.

## **B. ISOLATION OF THE OFFICER CORPS FROM POLITICS**

### **1. “Absorbing” the Officer Corps into Politics**

Although, there was not a notion of an isolation of the military from politics in the initial years of the republic, it became an obligation in the next years. This was a gradual process, accelerated by the introduction of a law that necessitated the resignation from either military or parliament, and ended with the resignation of the remaining politicians from their military posts in 1927.<sup>53</sup>

The army, which had played a key role in the founding of the Turkish Republic, continued to play its role by the officers taking part in critical political posts in the government. Similarly, Mustafa Kemal wanted to keep the military under control instead of completely isolating it from the politics. As an example, he insisted that the Cabinet should include the Chief of General Staff as a full-fledged member. Moreover, one was able to see that the Chief of the general Staff serving concurrently as Prime Minister

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<sup>52</sup> Harris, George S. *The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics*. Middle East Journal, Vol. 19, No.1, Part I, Winter, 1965, 55.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 59.

during a critical period from January 24, until July 10, 1922, which proved the existence of an intertwined civil military interaction.<sup>54</sup>

## **2. Gradual Isolation**

Ataturk's (Mustafa Kemal) management capability had played a big role in civil military relations in such a contradictory atmosphere. If he were not meticulous in his moves, the tension between the military elite and the state would deteriorate. That is why it gains importance to examine his steps on civil military relations to a better understanding of the process.

He firstly undertook a gradual purge of the military to comb out some of the senior generals who had no interest in his ideals. Accordingly, at the end of May 1923 a group of prominent generals, who did not actively participate in the independence wars, retired from their posts.<sup>55</sup> These retirements showed the power of the politics inside the army and the power of the army in the politics.

A new crisis was started when some of the deputies who had been prominent generals in the army requested active military commands in addition to their civilian mandate deputies. It was not unusual for the officers to be a deputy simultaneously. But, it was a time that the parliament was becoming bipolarized and those generals had indicated before that, while they wholeheartedly supported the independence struggle, they did not always agree with Ataturk's methods of operation. Ataturk finally assigned them to critical military posts.<sup>56</sup>

## **3. Prerogative of the Military**

Military was always at the center of the consideration for any reform or a major change in the system. Just nine days before the proclamation of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal wanted the cabinet to secure a substantial pay raise for the armed services. Similarly, just before abolishing the religious office of Caliphate, he made a trip to Izmir

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 56–57.



to test the atmosphere of the military at close hand during the war games. He spent two months there, with intensive contacts with the Chief of General Staff and other key military leaders. These were the proofs of his extra ordinary sensitivity in conciliating with military.<sup>57</sup>

Immediately after the proclamation of the Republic, the actual isolation started. With the new regulations of the Assembly, the Chief of the General Staff was dropped from the Cabinet and directly put under the president. Another regulation was demanding that, henceforth officers on active duty must resign before running for parliament—only those who were currently deputies being exempt from the restriction. After that, the prominent generals who had active military duties, had to resign from their military offices.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the military power of the opposition group in the Assembly was decreased.

This incident did not yet bring the formal divorce of the military from the political arena, since there were still three generals in the Assembly: President Atatürk, Prime Minister İnönü, and Minister of Defense Kazım Özalp. Moreover, The Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense were promoted to full-general while they were fully engrossed in political issues. It was only in 1927 that these last three soldier-deputies retired from their military offices, and the Assembly became completely civilian.<sup>59</sup>

#### **4. Loyalty of the Military**

It is important to note that, General Fevzi Çakmak (later Marshal), who had shown an unquestionable loyalty to Atatürk, served for two decades as the Chief of the General Staff, from 1924 until 1944. Thus, until the Second World War, the Army with General Çakmak, played a compliant role with the government.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 59.

## C. DEMOCRATIC INCENTIVES

### 1. One-Party System

Throughout the foundation process of the new republic, the mobilization and the independence movements were always directed under a group of elected representatives, whose program was designed by Mustafa Kemal. He always chose to play the game according to the rules. One of the famous expressions of him was “Sovereignty belongs to the people,” which dominated the Assembly hereafter. After the convention of the Assembly, he formed Republican Peoples Party (RPP) against the “second group” who came to existence as an ineffective opposition. RPP governed the country until 1950, when the first fair and free elections took place in Turkey. According to some scholars like Zurcher, it was a one-party *dictatorship*, since state and the party was closely identified.<sup>60</sup> However, in 1925 and 1930, there were two attempts for a transition to multi-party system. Since the political conditions of the country were not ready, the attempts failed.

1920’s and 1930’s in the Turkish history were replete with reforms, running the gamut, from abolition of the Sultanate to modern dress codes, from abolition of the Caliphate to the replacement of the Arabic alphabet with the Latin one. Those reforms draw an outline of Mustafa Kemal’s dream; as he declared, he was dreaming a Turkey as a member of the “contemporary civilization.”<sup>61</sup> Becoming a member of contemporary civilization, by no means, necessitated to model the new country on Western values. Briefly, becoming a member of the contemporary civilizations was the initial democratic incentive.

### 2. Social Structure

There were major changes in the social structure of the new Republic. The reforms of the 1920’s eradicated the autonomy of the religion and religious institutions over the ruling elite. Moreover, the motivation for education created a group of middle

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<sup>60</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 166–167.

<sup>61</sup> Barkey, J. Henri. “Republic of Turkey.” In *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*. New York: Westview Press, 2007, 15.

class businessmen and professional men as an alternative to the officer cadre. Although it was a slow process, the steadily decreasing number of retired officers serving in the Assembly, was another important factor about the social change in the power structure.<sup>62</sup>

The changes in the social structure of military in that era is also worthy of consideration. The promotion system was almost stopped, since vacancies in the high ranks occurred only by death, retirement, or resignation. The resignation in young ranks was nearly impossible due to the long term of service required of commissioned officers. On the other hand, the army continued to attract new blood in terms of providing ardent youth to the military high schools, despite the erosion of the military predominance over the society. Over time, the freezing of the top ranks while accepting new recruits at the bottom inclined to instigate reaction among the junior officers. Moreover, cadets of the military academy compulsorily participated in lessons like *radical social reform*. This kind of education, although seemed superficial, tended to keep the military in the center of Turkish intellectual thought with a reformist tendency.<sup>63</sup>

Another factor that affected a social change in the army was the alliance with the USA in 1948. As of this date, Turkey-USA military relations intensified, and thousands of officers sent abroad for training in many countries. Those officers, who were educated abroad and exposed to the sophisticated systems, realized the difference between their own system and the modern ones. Ultimately, they tended to lose respect for their more traditionally-minded superiors, which granted a new impetus to the long-standing ferment within the officer corps.<sup>64</sup>

The new developments of the social structure of the new Republic and the military, brought about a parallel change. The Democrat Party, which garnered the majority of the votes in 1950 elections, was representing the social change of the country. On the other hand, the first military coup of modern Turkish history in 1960 represented the outcome of the social change in the military.

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<sup>62</sup> Harris, *The Role of the Military*, Part I, 61.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>64</sup> Harris, George S. *The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics*. Middle East Journal, Vol. 19, No.2, Part II, Spring, 1965, 170.

### **3. International Encouragements for Democratization**

In a very general sense, the defeat of the Axis powers in the Second World War was in itself a victory for democratic values.<sup>65</sup>

Accordingly, Turkey's positioning itself among the West, signing the UN charter in the San Francisco Conference in 1945, and being a member to NATO in 1952 were interpreted as an acceptance of democratic values by Turkey.

### **4. Transition to Democratic Elections (1945–50)**

The new President of Turkey, the *national leader* Ismet Inonu, took the power after Ataturk's death, in 1938. In a few years Second World War began and had a destructive effect on the country. Under the severe conditions of the War, the government applied marginal measures. 1942 Wealth Tax (*varlikvergisi*) was one of them. Although its main victims were the non-Muslim businessmen, it caused unrest among the Turkish bourgeoisie as well. The other poor infrastructural conditions like living without electricity in major towns deteriorated the situation. Widespread discontent prevailed. Inonu, who was aware of this unrest, and remembering Ataturk's "tutelary democracy" experience in 1930, he decided to allow a decree for political liberalization.<sup>66</sup>

The first organized opposition took place in 1945. Four deputies from RPP prepared the famous "Memorandum of Four," which was initially intended to make a reform in RPP, but later turned out to be organization an opposition party. The leader of the four was a landowner, Adnan Menderes, whose revenues were also deteriorated within recent years. The party rejected the proposal. However, when the four were supported by liberal media and their thoughts were taken into the newspapers, President Inonu made a speech, stressing that the main obstacle on the way to democracy was the absence of an opposition.<sup>67</sup>

The elections were held in 1946, the new Democrat Party (of the four) gained 62 of the 465 seats in the Assembly. It was not a small success. However, it was later

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<sup>65</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 208.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 206–207.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 212.

understood that there had been a massive vote rigging in the elections. The unrest became widespread. Democrat Party reaped this position for several years. In 1950, the first fair and free elections took place; there was a high rate of turnout, like 80 percent. Democrat Party took 408 of the 465, and Republican People's Party could take 69 seats. The first free and fair experience of Turkey with democracy was that election.

## **5. Democrat Party and the Army**

Despite the organic relation between the military and the RPP through the one-party era, there were dissident officers who were pleased at the emergence of the Democrat Party. When the inter-party tensions were at peak in 1947, a formal military officers group gathered in the Staff College, in Istanbul. This group decided a military coup in 1949, for a revolution in politics. They sounded out their aim to a high level General in the same year. However, he refused and stopped them from a coup attempt.<sup>68</sup> It was a proof of a growing interest towards the emergent party among the high level generals.

## **6. Subordination to Civilian Authority after 3 Decades**

The military, which was an unparalleled actor in the Turkish politics, was under a supreme coherence in favor of the single RPP, or simply the state. However, the emergence of the DP and accordingly the polarization in the army crippled this coherence. This process ended up with the success of the civilian authority. That was why the Chief of the General Staff was replaced only a few weeks after the DP won the elections, in 1950. In a few months, most of the generals, who supported the new party, became disillusioned with the new administration. With the resignation of the Cabinet members with military backgrounds, the Chief of General Staff had no representative in touch with the thinking of the military to voice its desires in the Cabinet.<sup>69</sup> Throughout the ten-year period, the Chiefs of General Staffs and the Cabinet worked compatibly. Turkish military had never been so isolated from politics for the last five decades. It was

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<sup>68</sup> Harris, *The Role of the Military*, Part I, 64.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 60–61.

an isolation that the young officers were not happy with, due to the deteriorating quality of life in terms of low income level of the officer corps.

## **D. INSTITUTIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

### **1. Military Institution**

In the first years of the Republic, the most coherent institution was military. That was why it had been used as an introductive organ of progressive practices, or an instrument for the spread of the reforms that Mustafa Kemal thought vital. Moreover, it was the “guardian of the regime” which would be used for many decades.<sup>70</sup>

In one of his visit to an Anatolian town, Mustafa Kemal made a speech, which was enough to manifested the institutional role of the military in the first decades of the Republic:

“Whenever the Turkish nation has wanted to take a step up, it has always looked at the army . . . as the leader of the movements to achieve lofty national ideals . . . When speaking of the army, I am speaking of the Intelligentsia of the Turkish nation who are the true owners of this country . . . The Turkish nation . . . considers its army the guardian of its ideals.”<sup>71</sup>

### **2. General Staff under the Prime Minister, 1944**

The mobilization of the Second World War revealed the defects of the Turkish Army in terms of preparedness and planning. Moreover, the position of the army in the politics, which was represented by Marshal Cakmak’s quite easily interactions with the politicians, became subject to inconvenience among the politicians. As soon as he retired in 1944, the new general who replaced him complied with the politicians about a re-positioning of the military in the politics. Ultimately, the Chief of General Staff was subordinated to the Prime Minister under injunction to deal directly with the other ministries in case.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Harris, *The Role of the Military*, Part II, 169.

<sup>71</sup> Turk Inkilap Tarihi Enstitüsü. *Ataturk’un Soylev ve Demecleri*. Ankara:Vol.2, 1952, 266.

<sup>72</sup> Harris, *The Role of the Military*, Part I, 63.

### **3. General Staff under the Ministry of Defense, 1949**

While competing for the elections of 1950, both parties, DP and RPP, did not abstain from giving voice to downgrade the establishment of the military establishment. Thus, RPP in May 1949 had finally moved the General Staff under the Ministry of Defense to ensure stronger civilian control over the military. At the same time a National defense Council was established in order to coordinate all defense matters.<sup>73</sup>

### **4. Membership to the European Council, 1949**

Turkey's two-hundred-year-old history of Westernization became the source of the membership to the Council, which was accepted as a significant step. It was also a step of 'institutional integration' of Turkey into the Western World just after the Second World War. It had more symbolic and psychological importance for Turkey rather than pragmatic significance.<sup>74</sup>

### **5. Military and the Economy**

The military, with a role that was explained above, played an important role in the Economy. Marshal Cakmak, the Chief of General Staff, was attending to the Cabinet meetings and he enjoyed a direct access to all government and parliamentary leaders, many of whom were former officers.<sup>75</sup>

The co-existence of the politicians and the Chief of General Staff concluded in a structure where military has a say in almost everything. From location of the factories to the building of roads and railroads were mostly implemented after consulting to the military. In 1930's the economic development program was highly affected by the military considerations. Ironically, in these years there had been a decrease in the portion of the military in the national budget. However, it was not because of civilian supervision

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>74</sup> Dağı, *Democratic Transition in Turkey*, 131.

<sup>75</sup> Harris, *The Role of the Military*, Part I, p. 60.

over the military budget but due to the static defense concept espoused by Marshal Cakmak.<sup>76</sup>

## **6. Institutional Perceptions**

The mid 1950s were morally and materially difficult years for the officer corps. The power structure was completely changing, with the motto of the government,” a millionaire in every quarter,” and an emerging middle class were monopolizing wealth and status in society. As an example, the inadequacy of the payments came to a point that, in 1956, one third of the commissioned officers had left the military for that reason. The attitude of the politicians towards the military was bitter. In 1954, the prime minister was widely quoted as saying that he could run the army with reserve officers if he wanted. It instigated unparalleled recoil among the regular officers. Lastly, the religious tendencies of the government also disturbed the military regarding the damage to the reform program initiated by Atatürk.<sup>77</sup> It was mostly based on the special rights given to the minorities which appeared to threaten the bases of national unity which Atatürk had exerted such an effort. These kinds of institutional discomfort, created some reactionary movements organized by young officers in the army. The initial intention of those cliques was just a reform in the military; however, with the economic crisis of 1957 and the political strife brought about a military coup as a tendency among these cliques.<sup>78</sup> The arrest of the nine officers in 1957 due to an alleged coup plot, which was publicized one year later, revealed the irregularity between the two institutions of the state.<sup>79</sup>

## **E. UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE 1960 MILITARY COUP**

It was understood that a military coup had taken place at three o'clock in the morning, when a declaration was broadcast on Turkish Radio later in the morning of 27 May 1960. The coup was planned and carried out by the colonel-level junior officers and

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>77</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 232.

<sup>78</sup> Harris, *The Role of the Military*, Part II, 170–173.

<sup>79</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 238.



led by a retired Army Commander. The President, Prime Minister, several members of the Cabinet, the Chief of the General Staff, and the previous Chiefs of the General Staff were arrested. Prime minister and several cabinet members were executed after a trial in 1961. Except the execution of the politicians, the coup was almost bloodless.

### **1. Erosion in the Commitment to Democracy: Pressure on Press and Opposition**

The main cause of the 1960 coup was escalating tension between the government and opposition that threatened to erupt into a civil war. Just after he was firstly elected in 1950, Adnan Menderes built on the liberalization policy that followed Atatürk's death in 1938. The relaxation of the laws that restricted the role of minorities and Islam was one of them. Menderes administration repeatedly passed legislation designed to restrict freedom of press, since a strong Kemalist opposition was vastly supported by the press. Anything "designed to damage the political or financial prestige of the state," or "belittling persons holding official positions" was subject to investigation. This kind of frictions increased in his second term in the late 1950s. Polarized public opinion led to violent clashes in 1959, which was fuelled by the growing hostilities between the government and opposition supporters. One year later, in April 1960, university campuses were paralyzed by a series of large-scale student demonstrations, which led to bloody confrontations with police forces. Neither the confinement of the demonstrators nor the imposition of martial law could restore the civil order. As Tachau and Heper asserted;

the regime assumed the character of a 'guardian' regime i.e., one which took control of the government for the purpose of preserving (or re-establishing) the status-quo. . . It is significant that the coup occurred primarily in response to the strong indications that the government's commitment to democratic procedures had seriously eroded.<sup>80</sup>

### **2. Developments to the Detriment of Military**

After the death of Atatürk, Turkish General Staff, which had been accustomed to have a say in politics, was isolated from interaction with the politicians and politics.

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<sup>80</sup> Tachau, Frank, and Heper, Metin. *The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey*. Comparative Politics, Vol. 16, no. 1, October, 1983, 21.

There were several reasons for that. Firstly, the effect of the personal charisma of the Chief of the General Staff Marshal Fevzi Çakmak (who had been in the post for the longest term in Turkish history—two decades) would be exceeded by no other general at the time.

Secondly, with the rhetoric of a more democratic administrative system and a multi-party elections, and with the emergence of an opposition who had rhetoric against the power of the military in the politics, diminishing the influence of the Turkish General Staff in politics became an election issue. That was why in 1959, just one year before the first fair and free elections of Modern Turkish history, the government who was in the power for three decades, subordinated the Turkish General Staff to the Ministry of Defense.

Thirdly, the emergence of new middle class elite different from the officer corps and their inclusion into the system, which was accustomed to be fed by the retired officers, diminished the number of active politicians or bureaucrats whose previous profession had been in the military. Thus, the organic relation between the military and the governmental institutions weakened.

Lastly, during 1950s, the salaries and working conditions of the officer corps deteriorated and the Democrat Party frequently interfered in military postings and promotions.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, a rumor about the Prime Minister concerning his belittling remarks about the army, created a discomfort among the officer corps.

## **F. ASSESSMENT OF THE VARIABLES**

### **1. Isolation from Politics**

#### ***The Beginning: Absorbing the Officers into the Politics!***

The fact that the foundation of the republic was based on a military cadre had unified the officers and the politicians in a complicated way. Moreover,

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<sup>81</sup> Jenkins, *Continuity and Change*, 341.

Mustafa Kemal wanted to keep the military under control instead of completely isolating it from the politics. It was not an unfamiliar scene that an officer voting in the assembly as a politician with his uniform; a Cabinet, including the Chief of General Staff as a full-fledged member; even, the Chief of the General Staff serving concurrently as Prime Minister for six months, which proved the existence of an intertwined civil military interaction.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, the leading politicians mostly had military backgrounds. Thus, there was an organic connection between military and politics.

### ***Loyalty to the Civilian Authority***

For the first two decades of the new Republic military was loyal to the political organization due to the personal loyalty of the Chief of the General Staff. However, it enjoyed a privilege of involving into politics. It was due to the existence of the charismatic personality, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, until 1944. None of his successors could enjoy such a privilege. His retirement co-existed with the multi-party transition process. Thus, his successors became subject to political rallies and rhetoric between the parties, in terms of diminishing the military influence on the politics. However, the loyalty of military went on. In that era, the high-level military cadre compatibly worked with the Democrat Party government. On the other hand that loyalty could be explained in terms of political tendencies of the generals. Whatever the reason could be, the result was that the military and the political organizations worked compatibly in the first period.

### ***Legislative Regulations for Isolation***

The removal of the military from cabinet and repositioning under the direct control of the president was the first legislative attempt for isolation. This change not only kept the military from direct daily political debates, but also provided a supporting force for the president.

The decree that necessitated the resignation from the military post to become a politician was another step towards the isolationist tradition. One of the

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<sup>82</sup> Harris, *The Role of the Military*, Part I, 55.

reasons of that legislative maneuver could be weakening the opposition, but eventually it became a step of the gradual isolation.

The repositioning of the Chief of the General Staff under the Prime Minister just after the retirement of the Marshal, in 1944, was another move to eradicate the privilege of the military. The re-adjustment of the military's position in 1949, putting under the Minister of the Defense, proved the political will to water down the military influence in those years.

### ***Implications***

The first period of our study, 1918–1960, was characteristically diverse regarding the isolation from politics. this period may be characterized as:

- Initially direct and organic connection between military and civilians,
- Partly isolation of the officer corps from politics, by legislative regulations,
- A constant loyalty to the political authority,
  - Marshal Fevzi Çakmak's two-decade term as the Chief of the General Staff,
  - Existence of a privileged position for the military,
- The introduction of the multi-party system:
  - More moderate and democratic civil military relations,
  - The isolation of the top brass officer corps from politics.
- Civil military balance could not prevent the military coup of the young officers,
  - The resentment of the officer corps in general,
  - Lack of the isolation from politics among the young officers who performed the military coup.

## **2. Democratic Incentives**

### ***One-party Era***

As a summary, despite the democratic incentives, Turkey was ruled under a one-party rule for almost three decades, which cannot be accepted as

democracy. In the meantime, there were two attempts for a multi-party system (1925–30), and the reforms showed their effects by creating a social change on the new generation that ultimately accelerated the transition to democracy. The actual transition took place in between 1945–1950.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Social Reforms as Investments to Future Democracy***

The most important democratic incentive of that period was the reforms and the change in the social structure which affected the next decades of the country in terms of transition to democracy.

The social structure had dramatically changed in that era. It was due to the social reforms that aimed at making Turkey a member of the contemporary civilizations. The change of alphabet from Arabic to Latin script, electoral reforms in favor of females and many other reforms had been highly effective in imbuing the youth with motives of modern life.

### ***Positioning in the West***

Turkey's relations with Western world accelerated in that era. Turkey became a member of the United Nations, European Council, NATO and some regional organizations which were supported by the West in terms of bipolar struggle between the West and the East. Especially the membership to the NATO and becoming a close ally to USA had a dramatic change in the military system, and the officer corps. The new techniques and tactics of the new warfare and the different institutional traditions affected the young officers in Turkish army. It was also a social change within the army, which led to the 1960 military coup. Thus, the social change in the officer corps had a drastic effect in civil military relations in Turkey.

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<sup>83</sup>Zurcher, *Turkey*, 206–218.

### ***Implications***

- One-party system could not be accepted as a democratic regime despite the two multi-party attempts in 1925 and 1930. However, most of the democratic motives were invested under the one-party administration.
- The social reforms including the introduction of a western life style and education system, created a tremendous social change in 1930s.
- After the Second World War, the integration of Turkey to the Western world took place. The new memberships to the new organizations proved the Turkish will to stand with the democratic regimes.
- Soon after came the multi-party elections of 1950, which created a democratic era in terms of civil military relations.

### **3. Institutional and Economic Developments**

#### ***Institutional Responsibility of the Military***

The foundation of the new republic was led by the officers and the leading politicians of the first two decades were mostly originated from military. Moreover, there was an organic and direct relation between military elite and the governing elite. Naturally, the mission of the military was clearly defined as the guardian of the modernization and progress. This was clearly stated by Mustafa Kemal in a public speech in Konya. Military was also effective in economic decisions, since the new projects like railroad constructions or new factories were consulted to the military before activation. After the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938 and the retirement (after a two-decade-long tenure) of the first Chief of the General Staff in 1944, the balance between civilians and military began to change in favor of the civilians.

#### ***Important Changes for Subordination of the Military***

In 1944, just after the retirement of the first Chief of the General Staff Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, the government manifested its discomfort about the present civil military relations by subordinating the military under the prime minister. This was a drastic change in terms of the institutional role of the military. Five year later, in 1949,

civilians took one step more against the military and the military was put under the minister of defense. These two institutional changes were landmarks of the civil military relations background of Turkey.

### *Implications*

- The institutional role of the military was the guardianship of the modernization and progress.
- The military had a decisive role even in economics.
- The active presence of the military on the institutional realm of the civilians began to fade after the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the retirement of the first chief of the general staff.
- The military was subordinated under the prime minister, and five years later under the minister of defense.

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## **V. CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUPS (1960–1980)**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This period was marked with the direct military intervention of 1960, which changed the constitution thoroughly, and limited the capabilities of a government. After the coup, the Prime Minister and his several Cabinet members were executed at the end of a trial.

The 1960 coup was organized and carried out by junior officers in colonel level. Therefore, the coup was accepted as a revolutionary action within the army. However, the coherence of the military elite did not last long. After the coup, the military ruling elite divided into two fractions; one was pro-parliamentarian, the other fraction was pro-authoritarian. The struggle ended with the victory of the pro-parliamentarian side.

In 1962 and 1963, there were two more coup attempts. They were quelled and the leading figure was executed. The constitutional changes, which turned the government into an incapable institutional body and almost locked the political institutions, necessitated another constitutional amendment to ameliorate the authority of the government.

On 12 March 1971, the Chief of the General Staff handed the Prime Minister a memorandum, which was accepted as an ultimatum by the military. It demanded that a strong and a credible government be established that would be able to end the anarchy. If the demands were not met, the army would perform its ‘constitutional’ duty. The politicians did what was deemed necessary by the military, but the political violence and economic crisis never ended until 1980 military coup.

On the morning of 12 September 1980, the armed forces announced that they had taken the political power since the state institutions had stopped functioning. The announcement was read at 04:30 hours in the morning and also said that the parliament was dissolved, the cabinet had been deposed, and the immunity of the members of the

assembly had been lifted. The party leaders were arrested, a state of emergency was declared, and no one was allowed to leave the country.

“In the first six weeks after the coup 11,500 people were arrested; by the end of 1980 the number had grown to 30,000 and after one year 122,600 arrests had been made. By September 1982, two years after the coup, 80,000 were still in prison, 30,000 of them awaiting trial . . . the positive affect . . . was that the number of politically motivated terrorist attacks diminished by over 90 percent.”<sup>84</sup>

The period between 1960 and 1980 witnessed drastic changes in the institutional structure of the country, created by the constitutional amendments which were initiated by the military intervention of 1960.

### **1. Shift of Power after 1960**

After the 1960 intervention, the military elite returned the civilian authority back to civilians in a fast way. The effect of the direct military regime was only for more than a year. The democratic values and the need for isolation from politics were driving forces for the shift of power, while the broad constitutional change in terms of institutional development accelerated the process, since it was the goal of the military elite to put an end to the excessive authority of a majority government.

### **2. The Motive behind the “Soft” 1971 Intervention**

The motive behind the 1971 was the constitutional confusion that left the government almost powerless. The only aim of the military was to regulate the political system in terms of constitutional amendments. The institutional developments were the driving force of the military while the democratic values and the isolation of the military from politics were the factors that rendered the coup as a “soft” one.

## **B. ISOLATION OF THE OFFICER CORPS FROM POLITICS**

### **1. The Initial non-Partisan Character of the 1960 Coup**

There are different views in terms of the political tendencies of the military elite. Zürcher claimed that they were non-Partisan since they claimed to be above the parties:

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<sup>84</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 279.

The general public became aware that a military coup d'état had taken place at three o'clock in the morning of 27 May 1960 only when a declaration read by Colonel Alparslan Türkeş was broadcast on Turkish radio later that morning. The statement announced that the Turkish armed forces had taken over the administration of the country 'to prevent fratricide' and to 'extricate the parties from the irreconcilable situation into which they had fallen.' The declaration emphasized the non-partisan character of the coup.<sup>85</sup>

Karpat claimed that the military elite were coordinating with civilians, especially with the politicians of RPP.<sup>86</sup> Since the official and written scripts support the first idea, we had to accept that the military coup of 1960 was initially non-Partisan. However, the political tendencies of the leading personalities affected the relations with the parties in the following years.

## **2. The Irony: Do Politics, in Order to Isolate from Politics!**

Some months after the coup, the high ranking officers became worried about military matters, since their hierarchical superiority was undermined by the young officers. That was why, the top brass of the armed forces founded Armed Forces Union (AFU), which interfered into politics by memoranda and warnings. The senior officers were right in their anxiety about new attempts by the juniors, since in 1962 and 1963, there were two abortive attempts, by another colonel. Eventually, the senior generals went on warning the government and announcing memoranda about politics, in order to keep the initiative and forestall independent action by radical officers.<sup>87</sup>

It was an irony that, the senior officers were highly messed with the politics in order to isolate the junior officers from politics. They were successful to isolate the junior officers from open politics to an extent; on the other hand they created a new trend among the senior officers. However, this kind of warnings and memoranda became a tradition of Turkish civil military relations.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>86</sup> Karpat, *Military Intervention*, 142.

<sup>87</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 244.

### **3. Negative Effects of Interventions to the Military Institution**

It was accepted as a decisive factor that institutional structure of the military was damaged after the interventions. First of all, the young officers also incline to intervene into politics, since there is a probability of a vertical promotion after the intervention. Additionally, this inclination of the new generation officer corps, destruct the hierarchical command and control system of the military institution. Thus, top brass members of the military regime were aware of that danger, which caused them to take measures to prevent any probable repetition of military intervention.

One of the top brass generals of the 1980 military coup, Admiral Nejat Tümer, admitted that the promotion system of the institutional structure of the military was disrupted because of the military interventions. He added that military interventions could set things right only for the short term. Their long term effects are generally destructive for the military.<sup>88</sup>

## **C. DEMOCRATIC INCENTIVES**

### **1. The Involvement of the Civilians**

1960 military intervention was far civilian in terms of cooperation and intercourse. From the very first day of the coup, the organizers summoned five professors from the İstanbul University in order to prepare a new constitution. This attempt is an indicator that the officers did not have a coherent intention of an autocracy, or a political system different from democracy.

### **2. The purge of National Unity Committee (NUC) in 1960**

National Unity Committee (NUC) was established soon after the intervention, which was led by Gürsel who was vested with unique authority. The Committee was consisted of 38 officers and the leader, Gürsel. NUC was the governmental institution of the new administration, until the shift of power from military to the civilians.

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<sup>88</sup> Heper, Metin. *Civil-Military Relations in Turkey: Toward a Liberal Model?*. Turkish Studies, Vol. 12, no. 2, June, 2011, 242.

There were two groups in the NUC, first group, which was led by a strong personality who also was the advisor to the president, favored drastic changes in military and political system; on the contrary, the second group, which was led by the president himself, was more moderate, favoring the parliamentary system. The struggle ended with the victory of the second group. The first group was dispatched with appointments to the farthest locations as military attachés; for example the advisor to the president became the military attaché in New Delhi.<sup>89</sup>

The purge in the NUC in 1960 was an indicator that the radicals who were demanding drastic changes in the political system of the country were no more effective. Conversely, the new NUC was comprised of the members who were favoring a parliamentary system.

### **3. Considering the “West”**

General Muhsin Batur, who was the Air Force Commander of the 1971 military interventions, wrote in his book that a group of officers proposed an outright military regime. He turned the idea down, considering the “West,”

The Western world cannot accept this sort of system and procedure. It is just not good enough to say ‘if they don’t accept it, then so be it.’ If we give way (i.e., adopt the proposed plan) we will get support from the Eastern Bloc and Red China, but that would be a disaster for Turkey.<sup>90</sup>

## **D. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **1. A New Institution: National Unity Committee (NUC)**

It was announced by the military that the power was now in the hands of National Unity Committee (NUC) which was established soon after the intervention. It was led by Gürsel who was vested with unique authority. It consisted of 38 officers and the leader, Gürsel. NUC was the governmental institution of the new administration, until the shift of power from military to the civilians.

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<sup>89</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 243.

<sup>90</sup> Hale, William. “Transition to Civilian Governments in Turkey: The Military Perspective.” In *State, Democracy, and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*. New York: Walter de Gruyter Publications, 1988, 162.

Although the armed forces as a whole sided with the organizers and coup, the NUC did not represent the same coherence within the committee. The advisor, Aşparslan Türkeş, who was known to have pan-Turkist sympathies, was the most influential member of the committee. He represented the group of officers who had no trust in politicians and wanted a thorough reform of the political system. This group, which was named as the radicals, made radical requests, which were approved neither by Gürsel nor by the other members. Eventually, Gürsel disbanded NUC in November 1960, and established a new institution, excluding the 14 radical members of the previous group. They were sent to military posts abroad.<sup>91</sup>

## **2. An Institutional Role to the Military: National Security Council (NSC)**

The new constitution, prepared after the military coup, had given a role to the military by establishing an institution, National Security Council (NSC). The council, which was established with the introduction of the 1961 Constitution, mainly composed of the President, the Prime Minister, the Chief of the General Staff, Land, Air and Naval Forces Commanders, and ministers related with the national security. The NSC was chaired by the President, or in his absence, by Prime Minister. The extent and the effectiveness of the NSC were increased with the constitutional amendments of 1973 and 1982 Constitution. Until quite recently, the complicated structure of appointed officials and politicians supposed to be *de facto* ruling organization of the country. The governments were supposed to give priority consideration to the decisions of the NSC meetings.<sup>92</sup>

## **3. Professors and Their Effects in the Afterwards**

From the beginning, the military leadership was convinced that more than a simple government change was necessary. 27 May 1960 was the date of the military intervention; ironically it was the date of the intervention of academics into the

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<sup>91</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 242–244.

<sup>92</sup> Duman, Özkan, and Tsarouhas, Dimitris. “*Civilianization*” in *Greece versus “Demilitarization” in Turkey: A Comparative Study of Civil-Military relations and the Impact of the European Union*. *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 32, No.3, April, 2006, 415.

administration. On the very same day, five law professors from the University of Istanbul were invited to prepare a new constitution. They prepared a provisional constitution after which they legitimized the military intervention in terms of law. While they justified the military coup, they blamed the DP being unconstitutional. Ironically, this legitimization brought the confrontation of the NUC and the DP, which damaged the announced non-partisan character of the NUC.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the two institutions of the state NUC and one of the main political organizations of the country confronted.

#### **4. A Soft Balance between the Academics and the Military**

The road map of the intervention was well-planned. The organizers successfully took over the effective posts like command of the garrisons before the coup. They finally found a senior leader, Cemal Gürsel, who was the former commander-in-chief of the land forces, and who didn't have a good relation with the government. However, after the intervention there was a vacuum of authority in the state. As a solution, Cemal Gürsel had been appointed head of state, prime minister, and minister of defense which was matchless in Turkish history.<sup>94</sup>

In 27 May 1960, the military took the stage and took over all the government buildings in Ankara and İstanbul. All of the DP ministers were arrested, including the President, Prime Minister, and Chief of the General Staff. In August, 235 out of 260 generals and around 5000 colonels and majors were forced to retire from the army. In October, 147 university professors were sacked. These were probably due to the political tendencies of the officials towards the ousted government. All of the rectors of the Turkish universities resigned. The outcry and the extent of the protests of the academics had embarrassed the military leaders and soon a negotiating process began. Eventually the university teachers were restored to their positions.

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<sup>93</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 243.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 242.

## **5. New Constitution via a Stunning Referendum**

The restriction on political activity was lifted on January 1961, and eleven new parties were registered. The most important one was the Justice Party, which was led by a retired general, and which played a role close to the DP. The new constitution was more liberal than the previous one, in the sense that it tolerated a wider spectrum of political activity than before, both to the left and to the right. The new constitution set forth that there should be a referendum. It was held on July 1961 nearly one year after the military intervention, the referendum took place for the new constitution. The results were stunning. There was nearly 40 percent counter vote, despite the strong propaganda in favor of the new constitution! This was a setback for the military elite. The second shock was the result of the parliamentary elections on October 1961. Because the new parties that would be accepted as the continuation or heir of the Democrat Party, had the strongest political support in the country.<sup>95</sup>

## **6. A Different Intervention and the Constitutional Amendments**

The military, this time, did not oust the government by a military coup. The Chief of the General Staff handed a paper to the incumbent Prime Minister demanding that a strong and a credible government be formed which would be able to end the anarchy; otherwise, the army would ‘exercise its constitutional duty.’ The initial reaction of the politicians was negative in manner, but no more than passive responses; they resigned from their posts. However, in a short period of time they tended to bear a more conciliatory attitude. This intervention was followed with hope by the leftists, interpreting a similarity with the 1960 coup which was a junior-led operation against a right-wing government. On the contrary, it was planned and executed by the senior officers who were afraid of a communist threat, so it was a senior-led operation against the leftist movement.<sup>96</sup>

Referring the indistinctness in the politics, the military wanted the parliament to form a powerful government. Actually, the 1971 intervention was aiming to restore the

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 258–259.



governmental weaknesses created by 1960 constitution, which was written to prevent the hegemony of a single party supported by the majority. Only a powerful government would eradicate the anarchy and the chaotic atmosphere which was a product of the disabilities created by coalitions and minority governments. On that purpose, 44 amendments were made in the constitution.<sup>97</sup>

## **E. UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE INTERVENTIONS**

### **1. 1971 Intervention**

On 12 March 1971, the Chief of the General Staff handed the Prime Minister a memorandum, which was accepted as an ultimatum by the military. It demanded that a strong and a credible government be established that would be able to end the anarchy. If the demands were not met, the army would perform its ‘constitutional’ duty. The initial reaction of the politicians was negative. However, they behaved conciliatory and made necessary reforms demanded by the military.

### **2. Underlying Causes of the 1971 Intervention**

The next decade after the 1960 intervention, may be called as a tumultuous political era. Because there was no single party which could garner the majority of the votes, there was no effort for a strong coalition either. The increased number of the political parties divided the votes, and diminished the probability of a strong government. Leftist and rightist groups were making demonstrations. The street violence was rampant. On the other hand, the military often intervened into politics due to the new tradition of warnings. This process ended with the famous “warning” military intervention of 1971.

The main cause of the 1971 intervention was political and anarchic disorder in the country for several years. As early as 1968, demonstrators were so widespread that the Prime Minister of Turkey interpreted the issue as manipulation of the “enemies,” who aimed at undermining the democracy in Turkey. However, in the following years, the escalation of the right-left violence associated with deterioration of the economy, which

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 260.

ultimately paralyzed Turkish politics. Finally, violent demonstrations which were led by the student organizations and trade unions against new economic regulations, in June 1970, resulted in the imposition of martial law in İstanbul.<sup>98</sup>

The inability of the government was mainly due to the new regulations of the 1961 constitution, which apparently aimed the restriction of the ‘freedom of action’ of the government. For example, the establishment of the second parliamentary chamber, the adoption of a new electoral system based on a strictly proportional system of representation, granting universities with broad autonomy, and establishment of a constitutional court with powers to invalidate governmental decrees and legislation.<sup>99</sup>

However, the stance of the armed forces could be interpreted as “more moderate,” since the New Year’s address of the Chief of the General Staff of the time was focusing on the “responsibility of the constitutional bodies.” The civilian administration was either unable or unwilling to restore order. The first months of the 1970 were marked with bombings in every corner, sabotages against government buildings all around, or reports of a planned leftist insurrection. A memorandum came from the military, after some more criminal events took place in the beginning of March. In that memorandum, the situation of the country was reminded and it was mentioned that the goals that were put by Atatürk and the constitution were not met. Finally, the memorandum declared that there should be a strong and credible government to neutralize the anarchical situation. After the Prime Minister of the time resigned in 1971, the President welcomed the army:

The President publicly thanked the High Command, declaring that it had acted responsibly and he urged all Turks to support the new government.<sup>100</sup>

### **3. 1980 Intervention**

On the morning of 12 September 1980, the armed forces announced that they had taken the political power since the state institutions had stopped functioning. The announcement was read at 04:30 hours in the morning and also said that the parliament

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<sup>98</sup> Lombardi, Ben. *Turkey—The Return of the Reluctant Generals?*. Political Science Quarterly, Vol.112, No.2, 1997, 205.

<sup>99</sup> Tachau and Heper, *Military in Turkey*, 22.

<sup>100</sup> Lombardi, *Turkey*, 206.

was dissolved, the cabinet had been deposed, and the immunity of the members of the assembly had been lifted. The party leaders were arrested, a state of emergency was declared, and no one was allowed to leave the country.

“In the first six weeks after the coup 11,500 people were arrested; by the end of 1980 the number had grown to 30,000 and after one year 122,600 arrests had been made. By September 1982, two years after the coup, 80,000 were still in prison, 30,000 of them awaiting trial . . . the positive affect . . . was that the number of politically motivated terrorist attacks diminished by over 90 percent.”<sup>101</sup>

#### **4. Underlying Causes of the 1980 Coup**

1970s were examples of uncertainty; state bureaucracy was highly politicized and intellectuals were divided according to their ideologies. The military was the only cohesive and uncorrupted state institution. The late 1970s were the years of street violence and clashes between the rightist and leftist youth. The country was brought to the brink of a civil war. On the other hand, the presidential elections in 1980, became a deadlock since the political parties were stubbornly impeding the other’s candidate to be elected. The politicians were far away from voting for a president in the Assembly, let alone dealing with the internal security.

#### ***Constitutional Status and Responsibilities of the Military***

The legitimization of the 1980 coup was based on the article 35 of Law No. 211. Article 35 states:

The duty of the Turkish Armed Forces is to protect and preserve the Turkish Homeland and the Turkish Republic as defined in the constitution.<sup>102</sup>

The constitution defines Turkish Republic, in article 2, as:

The Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concepts of the public peace, national solidarity

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<sup>101</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 279.

<sup>102</sup> Author’s translation. The full Turkish text of Law No.211 is available at <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.4.211.pdf>, Accessed 1 March 2013.

and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, and based on the fundamental tenet set forth in the Preamble.<sup>103</sup>

Article 35 had been open to debate for years, whether it was a violation of constitution, since it gives the military the right to remove an elected government. A replacement of the elected government by the military is undemocratic; on the other hand, an elected government's abuse of constitution is also a violation of constitution. The interpretation of the constitutional role of the Turkish military is a guarantor of the regime and domestic stability. Therefore, the military influence in the politics of Turkey has not been constant, and has varied according to the changes in the course of domestic political circumstances. The influence decreased during times of stability and confidence, and increased during times of uncertainty.<sup>104</sup>

### ***The Political and Economic Disorder***

1960 military coup was carried out by the young officers, who were no superior than colonels. It was both a reactionary and a revolutionary coup. It was reactionary because it was against the government, and ended up with the execution of the prime minister and his two cabinet members. It was revolutionary because the young officers revolted against the experienced generals. The explanatory reasons of the military coup, which was partly touched in the previous chapter, are out of this study. However, the reactionary and the revolutionary characteristics of this coup became highly effective in the next two decades, in which the course of modern Turkish history had been drastically changed.

The main reason of the military coup was, one more time, lying beneath the political disorder of the late 1970s. The political instability was intermingled with the violence. On the one hand, extremists on the both sides resorted to murder; on the other hand, politicians reacted selectively, instead of attempting to repress this antidemocratic behavior. Ultimately, rightist political leader tended to excuse the rightist violence, while the left-wing political leader viewed the leftist attacks as legitimate

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<sup>103</sup> An English translation of the 1982 constitution can be found at [http://www.constitution.org/cons/turkey/turk\\_cons.htm](http://www.constitution.org/cons/turkey/turk_cons.htm), Accessed 1 March 2013.

<sup>104</sup> Jenkins, *Continuity and Change*, 339.

reactions to social injustice. The deteriorated economy co-existed with this gloomy atmosphere.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, different from the existing left-wing / right-wing ideological warfare, diversion between the parties varied from Islamist fundamentalism to extreme rightist Nationalism. This diversion in politics made it more difficult to form a strong government. Ultimately, when the Assembly proved inability to elect a new president after more than 100 ballots, it was perceived that political squabbling was taking precedence over the national interest.<sup>106</sup>

### ***Organized Violence***

During the 1970s, political and economic disorder was a real problem. On the one hand leftists and rightists were fighting for the control of the streets and campuses; on the other hand Turkey's economy which was depending on foreign investments and money, was becoming more fragile because of the general economic recession in the world and the oil crisis. Economic disorder and political violence deteriorated the social structure of the country in tandem. A mayor of a small town, called Fatsa, on the Black Sea, proclaimed a weird independence of a Soviet Republic; while the energy need, which was almost completely depending on oil, was becoming more problematic due to the oil crisis. The victims of the political violence was more than 250 in 1977, drastically the number went up to more than 1200 in two years. Through the end of the decade, new political and ideological threats emerged. Marxist terrorist organization PKK was established in 1978. Facing the escalating level of the violence and economic inability, the government had to implement martial law in more than ten provinces; in a few years, this number doubled. 1970s were politically and economically devastating for the country, which necessitated the intervention of the military in 12 September 1980.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Lombardi, *Turkey*, 207.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>107</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 265–268.

### ***Military's Active Role for Restoring the Order***

On the other hand, military was within the scene since 1978, in which martial law was imposed in thirteen out of sixty seven provinces. This number was nineteen in 1979, and twenty in 1980. Just before the military coup, one-fourth of the army was involved in restoring the civilian order. As for the officer corps, they had understood in 1975, that a new constitution was necessary. They even prepared in 1979 for an intervention similar to the 1971. In December 1979, the High Command sent a letter to the President, urging the leaders to solve the problems democratically. On 1 January 1980, a letter from the Chief of the General Staff was released, warning the administration about the anti-terrorist measures. A week later, an announcement of over sixty political demands was published which faded away under the political squabbling. Moreover, one week before the military coup, the Islamist fundamentalist party leader made a speech about restoring the Shariah (Islamist order); one day later, the left-wing leader gave a speech inviting the trade union members to take violent action if they felt injustice existed. In a week, military took the stage with the 1980 military coup.<sup>108</sup>

### ***Geo-Strategic Necessities for a NATO Member***

The end of the 1970s and the early 1980s were the years of conflicts and problems all over the world. Afghan invasion of Russia, Iran revolution, military intervention in Pakistan, Lebanon invasion of Israel and many other problems were taking place around Turkey, which was the only NATO member of the region. Therefore, the stability of Turkey was more important in global terms than it was domestically. Thus, the political violence and the economic problems of the country worried the West. It was manifested in some official reports and statements of the Western states like the USA and England. A short report prepared by Paul Henze for the White House indicated that:

The military are planning to introduce a presidential system with their new constitution. Increased executive powers of the president will be followed by new legislation on electoral and parties law to introduce a two-party and first pass the

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<sup>108</sup> Lombardi, *Turkey*, 208.

post system . . . This intervention of the Turkish Armed Forces should be supported openly by the United States.<sup>109</sup>

## **F. ASSESSMENT OF THE VARIABLES**

### **1. Isolation from Politics**

#### ***The Necessity for non-Partisan Character***

Although different authors made different assessments whether the coup was partisan or non-partisan, the official rhetoric and the initial actions proved that the intervention did not have a political tendency, at least initially. There are several reasons for that.

First of all, tendency for a political party would cause a political polarization within the army, in which there were definitely pro-RPP and pro-DP officers as well. This would also cause the destruction of the hierarchical command and control, which was experienced just after the 1960 coup. Second, the legitimization of the military intervention would be debatable in the perspective of the people who voted for DP. Third, it would also damage the understandability of the intervention in the international political arena.

#### ***Politicized Strategic Command for Depoliticizing the Tactic Level***

The revolutionary character of the 1960 coup, proved that the young officers, who had been educated in a different system, had a potential to revolt against the will of the senior officers in the military. Therefore, the senior officers had to create a new tradition to prevent the young generation from taking part in a possible coup. They founded an institution (Armed Forces Union (AFU)) in order to warn the political actors, so that the young officers would have no reason to deal with politics. Ironically, the senior officers were getting into politics in order to prevent the juniors from getting into politics, which marked the beginning of a new form of civil military relations, by continuous warnings from military as the guardian of the state and the regime.

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<sup>109</sup> Birand, *The Generals' Coup*, 195–196.

### ***New Measurements to Depoliticize the Junior Officers***

The curriculums at the military schools, especially in the war academy, changed in order to keep the young officers away from politics. The new education system mostly emphasized the loyalty to the superiors in the military hierarchy. The senior commanders made frequent visits to the war academies in order to *test the waters* and the tendencies of the new generation. Probably, 1980 military intervention, which was led by the senior officers and obeyed by the junior officers, proved the success of the new measurements that focused on loyalty to the superiors.

### ***Implications***

- The military elite insisted on a non-partisan image, to prevent a polarization within the military.
- Moreover, they changed the curriculums of the military schools to indoctrinate the loyalty to the superiors and the merit of hierarchy.
- In order to prevent the possible attempts of young officers, the senior officers resorted to intervening into politics by warnings and daily comments. This development created another tradition of intervention, which would last until recently.

## **2. Democratic incentives**

### ***The Involvement of the Civilians***

1960 military intervention was far civilian in terms of cooperation and intercourse, comparing to the 1980 military regime. This attempt is an indicator that the officers did not have a coherent intention of an autocracy, or a political system different from democracy.

### ***The purge of National Unity Committee (NUC) in 1960***

The purge in the NUC in 1960 was an indicator that the radicals who were demanding drastic changes in the political system of the country were no more effective. Conversely, the new NUC was comprised of the members who were favoring a parliamentary system.



### ***Western Incentives***

It was understood that, one of the reasons of the soft character of the 1971 military intervention was the Western consideration. According to the traditional Westernization process of the Turkey, it would be a controversy if they oust the political institution by an actual military coup, which was not favored at that time by the Western ideology.

### ***Implications***

- The involvement of the civilians had an effect for accelerating the process of transition, since the professors prepared a constitution, which was more liberal and social than the previous one.
- The operation within the NUC, in which the democratic group won the rivalry over the autocratic fraction, was the victory of the democracy over a possible military autocracy.
- The modernization and Westernization process of the country, which goes back to 18<sup>th</sup> century, was mostly led by the military elite. Therefore, in every attempt, as the case of 1971 intervention, the military considered the Western countries' reactions. It became a factor before and after the intervention. The “before” effect of the West was to soften the level of the intervention; while the “after” effect of the West was to urge the military elite for a transition into democracy.

## **3. Institutional developments**

### ***New Institutions and Their Effects***

Since the military coup was initiated by the junior officers, it was both a revolution in the army and a direct control of the state institutions by the inexperienced cadre. Therefore, the military elite who carried out the intervention had to search for a *senior support*. The establishment of the National Unity Committee (NUC) was a result of that senior support. The retired commander of the Land Forces, accepted to be the leader of the committee, which legitimized the young revolutionaries in the perspective of the senior officers.

On the other hand, the establishment of another institution, the National Security Council (NSC) radically changed the civil military relations of the

country henceforth. With the outweighing military members, the NSC has always been in the politics, until the recent changes in the structure.

### ***Institutional Tremors***

They called for the help of the academicians in order to change the constitution with a more liberal and social one, which would grant freedom to the people. The involvement of the senior support legitimized the coup; however, it also politicized it. Eventually, the new and strong institution of the coup, National Unity Committee had to confront with the strong remnants of the Democrat Party, against which they intervened.

### ***A Soft Balance Between the Academics and the Military***

The radical orders of the NUC, regarding the arrest of the politicians, retired generals, and dismissal of nearly 150 university rectors, created a discomfort among many segments of the community. However, the most reactive one was the academic cadre, which openly protested by the resignation of all of the rectors from the universities. At the end the academic cadre was restored to their previous posts. The involvement of the professors also should have had an effect on the moderation of the conflict.

### ***A Stunning Return to Politics***

The restriction on political activity was lifted on January 1961, and eleven new parties were registered. The most important one was the Justice Party, which was led by a retired general, and which played a role close to the DP. The new constitution was more liberal than the previous one, in the sense that it tolerated a wider spectrum of political activity than before, both to the left and to the right. The new constitution set forth that there should be a referendum. It was held on July 1961, nearly one year after the military intervention that the referendum took place. The results were stunning. There was nearly 40 percent counter vote, despite the strong propaganda in favor of the new constitution! This was a setback for the military elite. The second shock was the result of the parliamentary elections on October 1961. Because the new parties

that would be accepted as the continuation or heir of the Democrat Party, had the strongest political support in the country.<sup>110</sup>

### ***1971”Soft” Intervention and the Constitutional Changes***

The 1971 military intervention was a softer and milder one comparing to the previous military coup. It was mostly because of the institutional developments that gave a chance to the military to intervene into politics with a legal and legitimized organization, National Security Council. The military had to be contended with a warning to the government and demanding amendments for the constitution. It was also a result of the institutional inability of the government which was a product of the 1961 constitution.

### ***Implications***

- The establishment of the National Unity Committee helped to the legitimization of the military coup, since it was the product of a senior support from the top brass. It also institutionalized the existence of the military within politics.
- The 1961 Constitution and the establishment of the National Security Council was a further step of institutionalizing the existence of the military. Its overweighing military nature has been a decisive factor in politics until recent changes.
- The reconciliation with the academic cadre had an effect in institutional acceptance of the military junta.
- The referendum for the new constitution proved that, despite the propaganda, nearly half of the population was against the new regulation and basically the military intervention.
- The regulations of 1961 Constitution weakened the institutional authority of the government to prevent the hegemony of a single party supported by the majority. However, the new system rendered the governments unable to govern effectively, which brought about the economic and political crisis of 1960s. This process ended with the second but milder intervention of 1971, which was basically a list of demands for some constitutional amendments.

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<sup>110</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 246.

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## **VI. CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS AFTER THE LAST COUP (1980–2013)**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This period, includes the rule of the military regime in between 1980 and 1983 and the afterwards. The rise of civilian authority was mostly due to a civilian politician, who was not banned from politics and who acted as a counselor through the military regime. Turgut Ozal, enjoying having no political background, formed a new party and garnered the majority of 1983 elections, after which he became the Prime Minister. Although the military elite openly supported another party, they respected the elected government because of the *clean* background of Turgut Ozal.

The main transition of civil military relations began in Ozal's tenure. Since he applied a liberal economy system which helped a lot to erect the economy, the reforms and the civilian priority was welcomed by the military. It was also affective that he was a deputy Prime Minister of the military government, which made him familiar with the military elite, so that he could intervene into the military issues.

The term that the military lost power ended with the sudden death of Ozal in 1993. The revival of the military effects in the politics was in between 1993 and 2002. In 1997, the military intervened into politics with a *soft coup*, after which the Prime Minister of the time resigned and a new government was formed.

After the economic crisis of 2001, Turkish people made their choice, in the elections of 2002, on a new party which was promising justice and development with a fresh cadre. The Chief of the General Staff was also replaced with General Hilmi Ozkok, who had an understanding of progressive civil military relations, different from his predecessor who was accepted to have conservative paradigm about civil military relations.

The co-existence of Ozkok and the new party, which was accepted as successful in terms of economic developments, helped the implementation of important changes in civil military relations.

### **1. The Rapid Shift of Governmental Powers from Military to Civilians**

The military regime which lasted three years (1980–83) was ended with the rapid shift of governmental authority from military elite to the civilians after the elections of 1983. The motives behind this fast shift of power were mainly the democratic values encouraged by the Western powers and economic considerations, while an isolation of the military elite from politics was a supportive factor to the process.

### **2. The Gradual Shift of Political Power in terms of the Balance in Civil Military Relations**

The governmental shift of power had also triggered a broader and more general shift of power, which began with the strong government of Turgut Ozal. The military dominance decreased in the late 1980s. The sudden death of Turgut Ozal in 1993 affected the balance adversely, ending with the soft intervention of 1997, after which the Prime Minister resigned. The democratic values, which were embodied in the membership process to the European Union, were the decisive factors for another decrease in the military dominance in the late 1990s. The new government after the 2002 elections, and its coexistence with the new Chief of the General Staff, Hilmi Ozkok, who supported the democratic values in terms of efforts towards membership, accelerated the general shift of balance to the detriment of the military. The process culminated with the engagement of the high ranking generals in lawsuits, regarding alleged coups against the incumbent government.

## **B. ISOLATION OF THE OFFICER CORPS FROM POLITICS**

### **1. Do what I said, Don't do what I did!**

The architecture of the 1980 military coup, General Kenan Evren, just eighteen days after the coup, made a speech to the cadets at the War Academy delivering those words:

Whenever the army entered into politics it began to lose its discipline and, gradually it was led into corruption. We can observe its most basic example in our recent history, during the Balkan War. Therefore, I demand from you once again not to take our present operation as an example to yourselves and never to get involved in politics. We had to implement this operation within a chain of

commands and orders to save the army from politics and to cleanse it from political dirt.<sup>111</sup>

These were intimate feeling of a General who was considering the isolation of the officer corps from politics as a crucial factor for the unity of the army.

## **2. Timetable for Transition to Democracy**

At the end of 1981, National Security Council (NSC), prepared a timetable of transition to democracy. This was believed to some extent to assure the Europeans about the Generals' genuine intention to establish parliamentary democracy and to ease the pressures. Additionally, it was thought that in order to rebuild Turkey's image in the West, such a public commitment would be helpful.<sup>112</sup>

## **3. Several other Motives**

First of all, the military elite who were well aware of the fact that it was not feasible to set up a permanent military regime, allowed the transition into democracy. They left the work of the civilians to the civilians. Moreover, they saw themselves as the 'guardian' of the regime, not the 'ruler' of it. Thirdly, the Turkish experience of democracy, and military interventions taught that a military regime could not have a popular support in the long term in this country. Lastly, Turkey's political, economical, institutional and ideological engagement in the Western world, and the present danger of losing the gains and accumulations of the last centuries since the reformist movements commenced, created a long-term thought that affected the Generals to decide a transition into democracy.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Hale, *Transition in Turkey*, 163.

<sup>112</sup> Dağı, *Democratic Transition in Turkey*, 137.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 139.

## **C. DEMOCRATIC INCENTIVES**

### **1. Pressure from the European Community and Parliament**

European Community initially reacted in a mild manner, since they did not want to alienate the new regime immediately after the coup from the sphere of the Europe. Even, the first reaction can be called as reluctance since the embassies of the member states dispatched reports that were very welcoming and positive. The increasing tone of criticism from the community was probably due to the internal developments in Turkey. However, there were several other reasons of the increasing criticism. Firstly, they realized that they could affect the course of event in Turkey by economic and political pressure with the aid package at hand. Secondly, the lobby activities of the politicians fled from Turkey necessitated the pressure the Generals for a fast shift to democracy in Turkey. Thirdly, the community was under the pressure of European public opinion against the Generals.<sup>114</sup>

### **2. U.S. Encouragement for Transition to Democracy**

As the main military supplier of Turkey, the USA and its reaction was important for the Generals. As soon as the military coup took place, U.S. officials declared that there will be no sanctions about U.S. aid to Turkey. U.S. expressed its trust in Turkish military and their promise to restore democracy. Moreover, U.S. officials blamed European counterparts for failing to understand Turkey's problems and effectively lobbied in favor of Turkey for a possible expulsion from Council of Europe. In return, the Generals agreed to the return of Greece to the military wing of NATO, and to ratify the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement. From the American perspective;

It believed that quiet encouragement of the Generals to restore democracy and respect for human rights would be much more effective (and less harmful to American interests) than cutting the aid or resorting to public diplomacy.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 127.



### **3. German Pressure for Transition to Democracy**

(West) Germany had always been the second biggest supplier of military and economic assistance to Turkey. Therefore, the relations between Turkey and Germany became important for the military elite. Besides, just after the coup, numerous politicians from Turkey fled to Germany for political asylum. Turkey's demand about their return was refused since they were accepted by Germany as the 'political refugees'. This problem got bigger by the activities of those refugees through European countries against the military regime in Turkey. They also became a source of information and sometimes misinformation or exaggeration about human right violations and torture allegations. Ultimately they were quite successful in terms of shaping the European public opinion about the new regime. As a result West Germany blocked the delivery of an aid package under the 1981 OECD aid consortium. Moreover, the German government also refused a Turkish request to coordinate another loan package. Since the process of a return to democracy had no progress at the time, the Germans were under continuous pressure from different parliamentarians, political parties, and pressure groups to reduce its aid to Turkey.<sup>116</sup>

### **4. Pressure from the other European Countries**

Britain followed a mild policy and a quiet diplomacy, in order to persuade the Generals to moderate their handling of the issues within the country or in its relations with Western Europe. They were also concerned about democracy and human rights issues. France's reaction was mainly an inter-state complaint to the Human Rights Commission against Turkey. Scandinavian countries stood firm from the beginning. They strongly condemned the coup when it took place and immediately took the issue to the European organizations. In short, democracy and human rights issues were highly publicized in the Western Europe. At the beginning the European countries performed a rather mild reaction; however, as the time passed, without much progress, they became tougher.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 127.

## **5. Criteria for Membership to the European Union**

Membership to the European Union was the last target of the Turkish Westernization process going back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Turkey, applied to the organization for membership in 1960s; however, the volatile relations with the West, the fluctuating domestic politics, and the hesitation of the leading European countries like Germany or France made it an excruciating process.

Copenhagen Criteria were the membership criteria for the EU, which were laid down at the 1993 European Council in Copenhagen, Denmark. The criteria necessitated for the candidate states, the stability of the institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of the minorities, and the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Although there was no mechanism for ensuring that any country which was already a member state was in compliance with the criteria, Turkish politicians devoted themselves to meet the criteria, which were debated and accused of being biased against Turkey's membership. By time, since the Copenhagen Criteria were the elements to carry out the Westernization and the modernization, military had also embraced the attempts towards meeting the criteria. For example General Özkök openly supported the EU membership and the reforms, and emphasized his appreciation for the modernization in 2003.<sup>118</sup>

## **6. New Curriculums, Favoring Democracy, for the Military Schools**

The change of the attitudes of the generals had affected the civil military relations both in terms of political-military interactions in strategic level and in terms of changing worldview of the officer corps. General Hilmi Özkök, who was the Chief of the General Staff between 2002 and 2006, performed a different (or democratic) approach towards civil military relations. His interpretation of the role of the Turkish Military was quite clear and democratic:

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<sup>118</sup> Aydinli, Ersel. *A Paradigmatic Shift for the Turkish Generals and an End to the Coup Era in Turkey*. Middle East Journal, no. 4, Autumn, 2009, 588.

The duties and functions of the military (in Turkey, too) have been designed by law and the Turkish Armed Forces are expected to conform to that legislation. Since those laws were enacted by the representatives of the people, the situation in Turkey does not deviate from the universally valid principle of ‘civilian control of the military.’ What differentiates Turkish case from others is the special relationship between the people and the military.<sup>119</sup>

Özkök, also planned to implement new curriculums in the military schools, which would favor democratic values and respect for the judgment of Turkish Nation, in order to bring up a new generation of officers who are imbued with democratic principles.<sup>120</sup>

## **7. Democratic Transformation of Civil-military Relations**

### ***The Conflict of “Guardianship” and “Modernization”***

The military’s roles of modernization of the country and the guardianship of the regime were not conflicting since the military was performing its *guardian* role in cases of political disorder and incapability that blocked the *modernization* process. As in the cases of Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal, military obeyed and complied with the strong political institutions, since they were strongly supporting modernization processes (1960 intervention was an exception since the government was overusing its political power against the oppositionist movements and leading to political disorder).

When the governments openly supported the Western and secular values and acted in accordance, the military would comply with the government. A military intervention into politics of such a government, and to *guard* the regime from a *modernizing* institution, would be discrepancy. This was the key element of the explanation of the silent demilitarization of Turkish Politics in the last decade, which was accepted as the transformation of the civil-military relations of Turkey.

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<sup>119</sup> Heper, *Civil-Military Relations*, 242.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

### ***Gradual Changes Beginning: 1997–2002***

Just after the recession of the Islamist party in 1997, the military returned to barracks. With the effects of the ongoing European Union membership process, important changes took place:

- In June 1999, the military judges were removed from the state security courts.
- In October 2001, the civilian membership increased in the National Security Council with an amendment to the constitution.
- That the government should give ‘priority consideration’ to the decisions of the NSC, was replaced a ‘notification.’<sup>121</sup>

### ***Gradual Change in Progress: 2002–2005***

After the elections of 2002, the announcement of the government about the strict loyalty to the modernization and secular values, and the coexistence of the Chief of the General Staff Hilmi Özkök, who was also loyal to the democratic values and the professional role of the military as in Western democracies, accelerated the transformation of the military’s role in Turkish politics.

- In July 2003, the requirement that the secretary general of the NSC be a serving member of the military was abolished.
- The secretary general’s unlimited access to any agency and the authority to inspect the implementation of the NSC decisions.
- The proportion of the civilian employees increased.
- The frequency of the meetings was reduced from once every month to once every two month.<sup>122</sup>

In 2002, 70 percent of the Turkish population was supporting the membership to the European Union. The reforms implemented eagerly and there was a hope for a full membership in the public opinion. However, by 2005, it was supposed that there was going to be no full membership. The discourse with the EU had affected the civil military relations, since the main reason of the reforms was to implement the EU reforms.

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<sup>121</sup> Jenkins, *Continuity and Change*, 346.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 347–349.

## **D. ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **1. Military Realized the Role of the Economy**

Despite many politicians were jailed or banned from politics for a while, one of the civilian bureaucrats, Turgut Özal, stayed in the power. He served for the military government as a counselor for economic issues, after the 1980 coup. However, he resigned from this post and formed his own party, and garnered the biggest slice of the votes of 1983 election, after which he became the prime minister. He was not favored by the military, neither was he supported by them when resigning from his post. However, his international personal connections, and vast economy knowledge and experience, rendered him an indispensable factor for economic development. That was why the military, had to work with him, which proves that the military was highly cognizant of the importance of the economy after the military coup.<sup>123</sup> This cognizance finally accelerated the transition process of the authority back to the civilians.

### **2. The Motivation of a Strong Governance**

One of the main targets of the military elite was to create a stronger country, in terms of governmental institutions. It was understood by the constitutional amendments they applied. The authority of the prime minister and the president was empowered. Although there was a supervisor role of the generals, it was in case of an inability in the governance. This may be interpreted that, there would be no intervention as long as there was a strong government in terms of institutional entity, or the new civilian actors and their political performance would decide a possible military intervention.<sup>124</sup>

### **3. Positive Approach of the Military Towards the Elected Government**

The Generals, after the 38-months-long military regime, had supported one of the political parties which had cleavages to themselves, before the 1983 elections. However, another party, which was publicly criticized days before the elections by the generals,

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<sup>123</sup> Tachau and Heper, *Military in Turkey*, 32.

<sup>124</sup> McFadden, John H. *Civil-Military Relations in the Third Turkish Republic*. Middle East Journal, Vol. 39, no. 1, Winter, 1985, 73.

garnered 45 percent of the votes. More interesting was that, the generals welcomed the new party. As McFadden asserted;

From the beginning, no one in the higher echelons of the military has evinced anything other than a strong desire to restore to Turkey a functioning democratic government. In short, while the military may have left itself in a position to intervene, only a return of the violent politics of the 1970s is likely to encourage them to do so.<sup>125</sup>

## **E. UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE INTERVENTIONS**

### **1. 1997 Intervention**

The National Security Council (NSC) presented prime minister, who was heading a pro-Islamic party, with a list of 20 directives, in 1 March 1997. There was two choices for the prime minister: Cracking down the Muslim revivalism, or providing the grounds for a military coup.<sup>126</sup> This process ended with the resignation of the pro-Islamic prime minister.

### **2. Underlying Causes of 1997 Intervention**

#### ***Weakening of the Military Dominance: 1983–1993***

As soon as the civilian government took the scene, after the 1983 elections, the new Prime Minister, Turgut Özal, gradually weakened both the institutional dominance and the psychological priority of the military in the daily politics. Firstly, he gradually changed the military representatives in the civilian institutions with civilian counterparts. One step further, he intervened into the appointment of the Chief of the General Staff, and appointed a candidate different from the one that the supreme command proposed, in 1987. He came up with the idea of military budget and defense funds, and broke the taboos related with the supremacy of the military among the bureaucrats. Moreover, his cabinet officially declared that the Chief of the General Staff should report to the defense minister, as the case in every Western democratic country. He cancelled a military training exercise due to political coordination with a neighboring

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>126</sup> Doxey, John. A 'Soft Coup' in Turkey. New Leader, Vol. 80, no. 4, October, 1997.

state, in which he emphasized the superiority of the political institutions over the military ones.<sup>127</sup>

When he became the President in 1989, he became an undisputable personal who exerted the political superiority over the military more decisively. The President's new foreign policy, regarding the developments of the Persian Gulf crisis, created a strife between the supreme command and the president. Interestingly, the reaction of the military was quite mild. The Chief of the General Staff resigned in 1990, which was an extraordinary development for the civil military relations. However, the civilian authority could not establish an absolute superiority over the military.<sup>128</sup> It is beyond question that this weakening process had created a grievance among the military elite, who yearned for the military atmosphere of the early 1980s. Probably this process had an effect on the 'soft coup' of 1997.

### ***Return of the Military Dominance: 1993–2002***

With the sudden death of the President Turgut Ozal had contributed to an increase in the political power of the military institution. Moreover, the change in the political life from strong governance to weak coalitions after 1991, and the continuous involvement of the military in the campaigns against PKK (Terrorist Organization in the South-Eastern Region of Turkey), kept the internal autonomy of the military intact. Being the direct responsible institution for curing the PKK problem, the military reinforced its position in politics as the spokesman of the internal threats (by means of taking decisions in the National Security Council). Moreover, the politicians began to rely on supporting military in order to stay in the power.<sup>129</sup>

### ***Revival of the Islam in the Politics***

In July 1996, a pro-Islamist party came to the power within a coalition. The new religious Prime Minister initiated some policies, which were

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<sup>127</sup> Karabelis, Gerassimos. *The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Post-War Turkey, 1980–95*. Middle Eastern Studies 35, no. 4, October, 1999, 137–138.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 139.

interpreted by the military as dangerous steps for the secular structure of the country. Most famous of these, was his attempt to strengthen the ties with Muslim countries, which were listed as the sponsors of the terrorism by the Western countries, most importantly by the USA. Moreover, his plan to build large mosques on sites that were integrated with the secularism and his attempts about lifting the ban on wearing headscarves for the civil servants on duty, created a conflict between the military and the government. The religious fundamentalism became the first among the internal threats. Finally, the rhetoric of a future implementation of the Shariah (Islamic Rule), by the officials of the party, was the last straw.<sup>130</sup>

### **3. 2007 e-Ultimatum**

On April 27 2007, the Chief of the General Staff General Yaşar BÜYÜKANIT publicized an electronic ultimatum warning the politicians about the secular structure of the Turkish state. However, it was promptly and strongly refuted by the government, reminding that the Chief of the General Staff is responsible to the Prime Minister according to the constitution.<sup>131</sup>

### **4. Underlying Causes of 2007 e-Ultimatum**

#### ***Guarding the Secularism***

In 2002, a Muslim democrat party, JDP (AKP) Justice (Adalet) and Development (Kalkınma) Party (Partisi), won the elections. The new government was relatively more stable and its political leadership was stronger. The coexistence of the new government with the new Chief of the General Staff Hilmi Özkök (2002–2006), who was known to be a progressive personality and who had a definite support for membership to European Union and appreciation for the implementation of necessary reforms, helped the civilian elite to experience working in coordination with the military. However, the religious tendencies of the new administration drew attention in the conservative side of the military. Especially, through the presidential elections of 2007,

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<sup>130</sup> Doxey, *Soft Coup*.

<sup>131</sup> Karaosmanoğlu, Ali L. *Transformation of Turkey's Civil-Military Relations Culture and Internations Environment*. Turkish Studies, Routledge Publications 12, no. 2, July 2011.



the pro-Islamist candidate of the JDP, radical religious demonstrations and low level official manifestations of radical Islamism intensified the anxiety of the military.<sup>132</sup>

## **F. ASSESSMENT OF THE VARIABLES**

### **1. Isolation of the officer corps from politics**

The generals, who were coherently organized and carried the coup out, were cognizant of a possible junior coup attempt. That was why the Chief of the General Staff made a visit to war academy and gave speech about the importance of staying away from politics.

The manifestation of a timetable for transition to democracy was another indication of a general isolation from politics. The previous military intervention experiences proved that there is no welcome for a military regime in that country.

The relations with the Western world, which had become a part of the modernization process of Turkey, also affected the attitude of the Generals towards isolation.

#### ***Implications***

- One of the first actions of the generals after the military coup, was to caution the young officers about isolation from politics.
- The timetable for transition to democracy was also a timetable for the institutional isolation from the politics.
- Considering the West had also affected the generals to focus on a isolation from politics.

### **2. Democratic incentives**

#### ***International Reactions***

The reaction of U.S. which was initially supportive, based on the geostrategic importance of Turkey's stability; it was also encouraging a transition into democracy. However, it was obvious that stability of Turkey was more important than democracy in Turkey for the USA.

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<sup>132</sup> Aydinli, Ersel. *A Paradigmatic Shift*; Jenkins, *Continuity and Change*, 348.

The reactions of the European Countries ranging from Scandinavia to the Iberia, and European Parliament were important for the Generals. Their initial reaction was reluctant (with exceptions of Scandinavian countries which reacted harshly from the very beginning); however, after a year of military regime, they began to strictly criticize the Generals for a transition into democracy.

As the informal representative of the European countries and the most familiar country with Turkey, Germany had a pressure on itself for creating a pressure on the Generals. The pressure was aiming at a fast transition to democracy.

### ***1990s: The Conflict of “Guardianship” and “Modernization”***

These two roles had never conflicted before. When guardianship was necessary, there was a threat to modernization. However, with the 1990s, the re-emergence of EU membership process and the embracement of the reforms by the civilian government, the two roles began to conflict, which ended with the victory of the modernization of the country by means of politicians.

### ***Membership Process to the European Union***

EU membership was a means of modernization. Therefore, the military, as the traditional instrument of the modernization, supported the process, even if the process would damage the military's political authority. In that point, the General Hilmi Özkök played the most crucial role. He democratically coordinated with the government. Moreover, whenever the Prime Minister and the Chief of the general Staff appeared in public together, Özkök and the Prime Minister appeared to have established a relaxed even harmonious relationship.<sup>133</sup> This coordination helped the implementation of the reforms even to the detriment of the military's traditional political authority.

The new curriculums in the military schools were also the indicators of democratization of the officer corps. The educational change also indicated that the military elite, led by Özkök, had seen the importance of the democratic values for modernization.

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<sup>133</sup> Jenkins, *Continuity and Change*, 351.

### ***Implications***

- Despite the fact that each government and organization reacted different, the international reactions had a role in transition to democracy.
- Membership to the EU, had a great effect on pacifying the relations between civilian and military authorities while taking drastic steps in terms of democratic civil military relations.
- The judicial, structural, and institutional changes, which were silently activated, had dramatic effects.
- The progressive paradigm of the military elite, led by General Hilmi Özkök, also had an unparalleled effect on reforms in civil military relations.

### **3. Economic and institutional developments**

#### ***Military Realized the Role of the Economy***

Economy was one of the factors that affected the cooperation with economy technocrats, which eventually accelerated the transition process from military to the civilians. Turgut Özal, who was the economist technocrat of the time, had the chance to govern the country for a decade, in which he also took measures against the priority of the military in the political realm.

#### ***The Motivation of a Strong Governance***

From 1980 on, it was interpreted that, there would be no intervention as long as there was a strong government in terms of institutional entity. The pacific reaction of the military to the reforms that were against itself, proved that the strong civilian governance, is a strong element of democratic civil military relations.

#### ***Positive Approach of the Military towards the Elected Government***

The Generals embraced the government of Turgut Özal, which garnered the majority of the votes. It was a product of the respect for the people and their choice. A similar case was in 2002, when the military embraced the JDP government. These are the indicators of a positive approach to the democracy by the military elite.

### *Implications*

- Comprehension of the importance of the role of economy accelerated the transition process after the 1980 intervention.
- Institutionally strong governments had the chance to cooperate and even subordinate the military.
- The institutional positive approach of the military elite towards the elected governments, proved that the military do not want to deal with politics anymore, in term of interventions.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

### **A. TRADITIONAL FEATURES OF TURKISH ARMY**

The relation between Turkish Army and the State, and its evolution in the traditional perspective, can be summarized as;

- The unification of the state and the army under the personality of the Sultan,
- The unique loyalty of the military to the Sultan but to no other entity,
- The privilege: the tradition of military men becoming state men,
- The army as an element of disorder in the Empire,
- The dire need for reforms and the resistance from the army,
- Transformation of the resistance and reactions into military intervention,
- The modernization of the army and the new education system on liberal thought,
- The army as a force, demanding a constitutional change in the regime,

Regarding the fact that the founders of the new Turkish republic were the officers of the Ottoman Army and were imbued with the reformist thoughts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it can be understood that the foundation of the new Turkish Republic and its new army were naturally affected by the evolution of this military-state interaction.

### **B. ISOLATION FROM POLITICS**

Turkish Military is a continuum of an experienced army of hundreds of years. Throughout the history, military and state have always united in one personality. The founder of the Ottoman Empire, Osman Gazi was a statesman and the army commander, as his grandchild Fatih the conqueror, Sultan Yavuz, or Magnificent Süleyman were. Mustafa Kemal was also an officer and general of the Ottoman army, who unified the military and the civilian personalities in himself. However, he managed to isolate the military from civilian authority during his tenure of 15 years.

### **1. Isolation in Turkish Army between 1918 and 1960**

In the initial phase of the independence movement, Mustafa Kemal had to resign from his military post. By resigning in order to serve for his country in terms of a civilian struggle, he also embraced and showed the difference between the soldier and the statesman. As he ascended the stairs of his political career he emphasized the necessity for isolation of the military from politics. From his time on, this isolation became one of the main traditions of the officer corps and affected the civil military relations of Turkey in a positive way.

Although in the first decades, there seems to be an absorbing of the military into politics, it was because of Mustafa Kemal's strategy of keeping the military under control. With the help of a loyal general, Marshal Fevzi Cakmak, the military never confronted with the politics in the first two decades of the Republic. By the way, Mustafa Kemal gradually isolated the military from the politics, by legislative measurements.

### **2. Isolation in Turkish Army after 1960 Intervention**

After the 1960 intervention, the military elite realized that they had to behave above politics, in order to preserve the unity of the army. An ironical result of the isolation process after the 1960 coup was that, the generals had to intervene into politics to prevent the junior officers from dealing with politics. They were aware of the fact that, the intervention damaged the hierarchical structure of the army. Therefore, they changed the curriculum of the military schools in order to give an education based on merit of the loyalty to the superiors. Those factors highly supported the isolation tradition, which would show its effects decades later.

### **3. Isolation in Turkish Army after 1980 Intervention**

The generals, who were coherently organized and carried the coup out, were cognizant of a possible junior coup attempt. That was why the Chief of the General Staff made a visit to war academy and gave speech about the importance of staying away from politics.

The manifestation of a timetable for transition to democracy was another indication of a general isolation from politics. The previous military intervention experiences proved that there is no welcome for a military regime in that country.

The relations with the Western world, which had become a part of the modernization process of Turkey, also affected the attitude of the Generals towards isolation.

### **C. DEMOCRATIC INCENTIVES**

Democracy, as a part of the modernization has always been respected by the military. According to the military elite, the problem was the inability of the civilian politicians who caused political and economic disorder in the country.

#### **1. Democratic Incentives through 1918–1960**

##### ***One-party Era***

As a summary, despite the democratic incentives, Turkey was ruled under a one-party rule for almost three decades, which cannot be accepted as democracy. In the meantime, there were two attempts for a multi-party system (1925–30), and the reforms showed their effects by creating a social change on the new generation that ultimately accelerated the transition to democracy. The actual transition took place in between 1945–1950.<sup>134</sup>

##### ***Social Reforms as Investments to Future Democracy***

The most important democratic incentive of that period was the reforms and the change in the social structure which affected the next decades of the country in terms of transition to democracy.

The social structure had dramatically changed in that era. It was due to the social reforms that aimed at making Turkey a member of the contemporary civilizations. The change of alphabet from Arabic to Latin script, electoral reforms in

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<sup>134</sup>Zurcher, *Turkey*, 206–218.

favor of females and many other reforms had been highly effective in imbuing the youth with motives of modern life.

### ***Positioning in the West***

Turkey's relations with Western world accelerated in that era. Turkey became a member of the United Nations, European Council, NATO and some regional organizations which were supported by the West in terms of bipolar struggle between the West and the East. Especially the membership to the NATO and becoming a close ally to USA had a dramatic change in the military system, and the officer corps. The new techniques and tactics of the new warfare and the different institutional traditions affected the young officers in Turkish army. It was also a social change within the army, which led to the 1960 military coup. Thus, the social change in the officer corps had a drastic effect in civil military relations in Turkey.

## **2. Democratic Incentives through 1960–1980**

### ***The Involvement of the Civilians***

1960 military intervention was far civilian in terms of cooperation and intercourse, comparing to the 1980 military regime. This attempt is an indicator that the officers did not have a coherent intention of an autocracy, or a political system different from democracy.

### ***The purge of National Unity Community (NUC) in 1960***

The purge in the NUC in 1960 was an indicator that the radicals who were demanding drastic changes in the political system of the country were no more effective. Conversely, the new NUC was comprised of the members who were favoring a parliamentary system.

### ***Western Incentives***

It was understood that, one of the reasons of the soft character of the 1971 military intervention was the Western consideration. According to the traditional Westernization process of the Turkey, it would be a controversy if they oust



the political institution by an actual military coup, which was not favored at that time by the Western ideology.

### **3. Democratic Incentives after 1980 Intervention**

#### ***International Reactions***

The reaction of U.S. which was initially supportive, based on the geostrategic importance of Turkey's stability; it was also encouraging a transition into democracy. However, it was obvious that stability of Turkey was more important than democracy in Turkey for the USA.

The reactions of the European Countries ranging from Scandinavia to the Iberia, and European Parliament were important for the Generals. Their initial reaction was reluctant (with exceptions of Scandinavian countries which reacted harshly from the very beginning); however, after a year of military regime, they began to strictly criticize the Generals for a transition into democracy.

As the informal representative of the European countries and the most familiar country with Turkey, Germany had a pressure on itself for creating a pressure on the Generals. The pressure was aiming at a fast transition to democracy.

#### ***Membership Process to the European Union***

EU membership was a means of modernization. Therefore, the military, as the traditional instrument of the modernization, supported the process, even if the process would damage the military's political authority. In that point, the General Hilmi Özkök played the most crucial role. He democratically coordinated with the government. Moreover, whenever the Prime Minister and the Chief of the general Staff appeared in public together, Özkök and the Prime Minister appeared to have established a relaxed even harmonious relationship.<sup>135</sup> This coordination helped the implementation of the reforms even to the detriment of the military's traditional political authority.

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<sup>135</sup> Jenkins, *Continuity and Change*, 351.

The new curriculums in the military schools were also the indicators of democratization of the officer corps. The educational change also indicated that the military elite, led by Özkök, had seen the importance of the democratic values for modernization.

### ***1990s: The Conflict of “Guardianship” and “Modernization”***

These two roles had never conflicted before. When guardianship was necessary, there was a threat to modernization. However, with the 1990s, the re-emergence of EU membership process and the embracement of the reforms by the civilian government, the two roles began to conflict, which ended with the victory of the modernization of the country by means of politicians.

## **D. INSTITUTIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

### **1. Institutional and Economic Developments between 1918 and 1960**

#### ***Institutional Responsibility of the Military***

The foundation of the new republic was led by the officers and the leading politicians of the first two decades were mostly originated from military. Moreover, there was an organic and direct relation between military elite and the governing elite. Naturally, the mission of the military was clearly defined as the guardian of the modernization and progress. This was clearly stated by Mustafa Kemal in a public speech in Konya. Military was also effective in economic decisions, since the new projects like railroad constructions or new factories were consulted to the military before activation. After the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938 and the retirement (after a two-decade-long tenure) of the first Chief of the General Staff in 1944, the balance between civilians and military began to change in favor of the civilians.

#### ***Important Changes for Subordination of the Military***

In 1944, just after the retirement of the first Chief of the General Staff Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, the government manifested its discomfort about the present civil military relations by subordinating the military under the prime minister. This was a drastic change in terms of the institutional role of the military. Five year later, in 1949,

civilians took one step more against the military and the military was put under the minister of defense. These two institutional changes were landmarks of the civil military relations background of Turkey.

## **2. Institutional and Economic Developments between 1960 and 1980**

### ***New Institutions and Their Effects***

Since the military coup was initiated by the junior officers, it was both a revolution in the army and a direct control of the state institutions by the inexperienced cadre. Therefore, the military elite who carried out the intervention had to search for a *senior support*. The establishment of the National Unity Committee (NUC) was a result of that senior support. The retired commander of the Land Forces, accepted to be the leader of the committee, which legitimized the young revolutionaries in the perspective of the senior officers.

On the other hand, the establishment of another institution, the National Security Council (NSC) radically changed the civil military relations of the country henceforth. With the outweighing military members, the NSC has always been in the politics, until the recent changes in the structure.

### ***Institutional Tremors***

They called for the help of the academicians in order to change the constitution with a more liberal and social one, which would grant freedom to the people. The involvement of the senior support legitimized the coup; however, it also politicized it. Eventually, the new and strong institution of the coup, National Unity Committee had to confront with the strong remnants of the Democrat Party, against which they intervened.

### ***A Soft Balance Between the Academics and the Military***

The radical orders of the NUC, regarding the arrest of the politicians, retired generals, and dismissal of nearly 150 university rectors, created a discomfort among many segments of the community. However, the most reactive one

was the academic cadre, which openly protested by the resignation of all of the rectors from the universities. At the end the academic cadre was restored to their previous posts. The involvement of the professors also should have had an effect on the moderation of the conflict.

### ***A Stunning Return to Politics***

The restriction on political activity was lifted on January 1961, and eleven new parties were registered. The most important one was the Justice Party, which was led by a retired general, and which played a role close to the DP. The new constitution was more liberal than the previous one, in the sense that it tolerated a wider spectrum of political activity than before, both to the left and to the right. The new constitution set forth that there should be a referendum. It was held on July 1961, nearly one year after the military intervention that the referendum took place. The results were stunning. There was nearly 40 percent counter vote, despite the strong propaganda in favor of the new constitution! This was a setback for the military elite. The second shock was the result of the parliamentary elections on October 1961. Because the new parties that would be accepted as the continuation or heir of the Democrat Party, had the strongest political support in the country.<sup>136</sup>

### ***1971 "Soft" Intervention and the Constitutional Changes***

The 1971 military intervention was a softer and milder one comparing to the previous military coup. It was mostly because of the institutional developments that gave a chance to the military to intervene into politics with a legal and legitimized organization, National Security Council. The military had to be contended with a warning to the government and demanding amendments for the constitution. It was also a result of the institutional inability of the government which was a product of the 1961 constitution.

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<sup>136</sup> Zurcher, *Turkey*, 246.

### **3. Institutional and Economic Developments after 1980 Intervention**

#### ***Military Realized the Role of the Economy***

Economy was one of the factors that affected the cooperation with economy technocrats, which eventually accelerated the transition process from military to the civilians. Turgut Özal, who was the economist technocrat of the time, had the chance to govern the country for a decade, in which he also took measures against the priority of the military in the political realm.

#### ***The Motivation of a Strong Governance***

From 1980 on, it was interpreted that, there would be no intervention as long as there was a strong government in terms of institutional entity. The pacific reaction of the military to the reforms that were against itself, proved that the strong civilian governance, is a strong element of democratic civil military relations.

#### ***Positive Approach of the Military towards the Elected Government***

The Generals embraced the government of Turgut Özal, which garnered the majority of the votes. It was a product of the respect for the people and their choice. A similar case was in 2002, when the military embraced the JDP government. These are the indicators of a positive approach to the democracy by the military elite.

### **E. CONCLUSION**

Turkish Military, the most trusted institution in the country for decades, has been a symbol of modernization and secularism in the country since the independence of the Republic in 1923. Especially with the introduction of the multi-party system after the Second World War, Turkish Military's role became conspicuous by military interventions.

Turkey witnessed 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997, and 2007 military interventions each in a different character. However, instead of grasping the civilian authority for decades, Turkish military elite tried to stay behind the curtains and passed on the governance to

the civilians. Turkey was under direct control of the military only through 1960–62 and 1980–83.

Especially in the last decade, the change in civil-military relations aroused a scholarly debate on the role of the military in politics. This thesis examined the military interventions in order to define the attitudes of the military elite, by focusing on the reasons of the rapid shift of power from military to civilians.

The isolation from politics, which was initiated by the founder of the Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, was one of the main reasons of the fast shift of power from the military to the civilian authority. Since Ataturk was a national symbol as the “father of the Turks,” his isolation from military by resigning in 1919, became an example and a tradition for the officer corps.

Democratic incentives, as part of the modernization of the country, have always been supported by the military and remained as one of the main reasons of the fast shift of power. The close relations with the West had a great role in this factor.

Institutional and economic developments were also decisive in the fast shift of power, although they gained vital importance in the last period of our study.

This thesis argues that the delegation of power from military to civilians is mainly due to the harsh isolation of officer corps from politics, democratic incentives in terms of modernization, and economic and institutional developments.

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